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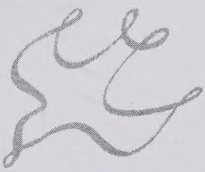

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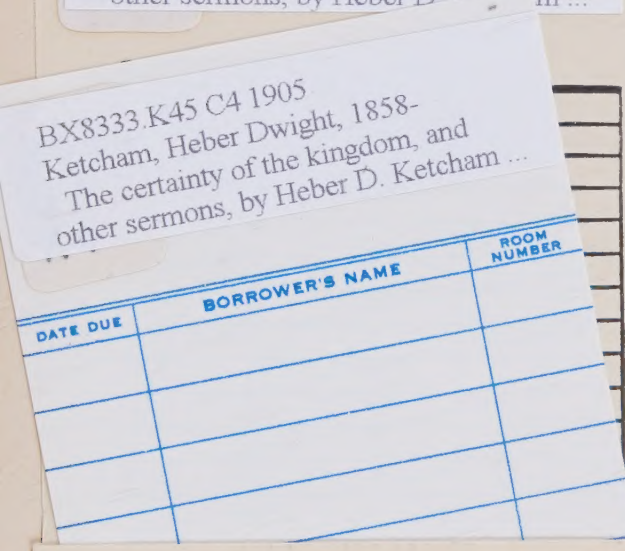
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The Methodist Pulpit

The Certainty of the Kingdom

Heber D. Kelcham

K 49

The Certainty of the Kingdom

and

Other Sermons

By

HEBER D. KETCHAM, D. D.
[Of the Cincinnati Conference]

CINCINNATI: JENNINGS AND GRAHAM
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To the Memory of My Father,
WHOSE MINISTRY LED ME TO CHRIST

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PREFATORY

In the study of doctrine no definitions have seemed to us more confused that those stating the processes of grace in Christian experience. Yet no need is more urgent for the spread of the Word than that these truths should be clearly seen. It is with the hope, yes prayer, that the ways of God in the heart of man may be made more plain to the reader by this volume, that the eight sermons in it, like those rescued by the ark, are given to the flood.

H. D. K.

I.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE KINGDOM.

"He must reign."—1 Cor. xv, 25.

Heathenism and Christianity are both in the dusk, but on the antipodes, the one rolling into the night, the other into the sunlight. It is scarcely four o'clock in the morning of the world's Christianization. Less than one-third of the race is nominally Christian to-day. Yet the ascending light grays the dawn, and soon will mark the coronation of the night with the first gold of the morning. The ages have been tardy in their response to the call of Calvary, but now the forces seem marshaling for the triumphant entering of the reign of the Redeemer. The clocks of the nations have been striking the hours, each, in turn, counting some new figure on the dial of religious thought. When the meridian shall be reached and the perfect come, it will be seen that all history was but the successive stages of civilization, whose morning hours in even time have contributed to the growing splendor of

Christ's noonday glory. The translated refrain of every battle-hymn of the nations to-day is:

> "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Does his successive journeys run."

The Christian Church for half a century has been singing, "The morning light is breaking," but never till now has been able to sing it without the light of the torch. The lamp is now in the sky, and by and by will wait at the meridian. In the confidence born of the centuries of watching, but now jubilant in assured victory, let the shout go heavenward. The triumph is coming.

The fact of our text, assured in its continuance until the death of time, and limited alone in its earthly permanence by the resurrection, is the most magnificent challenge to infidelity that has paralleled the ages and put to flight the fears of men.

Those who believe in the absolute certainty of the coming of Christ's kingdom will ally with it their fortunes, their feelings, their faith. It is with the hope that this end may be served and some new recruit may be gained for the army of the invincibles that the theme of the hour is presented. In doing so, however, we are not so much concerned with the unfolding of the character of Christ's earthly

reign as we are with the triumphant, assured fact of it. We, therefore, invite attention to three proofs of Paul's declaration, "He must reign."

I. The kingdom of Christ is assured in that God's moral government is poised upon the plan of redemption in Him, and can not fail without imperiling the Divine honor, pledged to redeem the race.

Revelation has been progressive as well as man's understanding of it. It seems that God has suited his thought in all ages to men. He has approached them in the way they could best understand. He has brought the upper world to the level of the lower, willing to distort His nobler ideals that men might catch a glimpse or see the reflection of His glory. It is as though the invisible world was struggling to crowd its better nature into the very fiber of the visible—two worlds lying close, yet locked apart by the dullness of the physical. The spirit world has struggled to be eyes for the material, yet has found difficulty in locating the sightless sockets. Every former method had been exhausted in preparation for the one in Christ. The successive stages of approach had all been compassed, and now all intelligences await the outcome.

See, in brief, the plans with men in the begin-

ning years of even our own Revelation. In the ruder age, when men were less reasonable and more spectacular, God laid His hand upon a young Semite, Abram by name, who had native endowment and the capacity for faith adequate to the great task. Before that, as since, God had "sent the world to His great common school." It was the light of conscience. But with Abraham He started His first "high school" class in the centuries. Through him He would tutor the race to the reason of faith, and teach man to understand the prompting to purity already possessed.

Ceremony in religion is a plan to prevent evil by keeping men busy. It is but the point of order in a parliament, to prevent riot, and good because there is not something better at hand in direct communication. Yet ceremonial worship was sanctioned of God that moving humanity might at some angle come into line with the flash of Revelation. Through it the keener minds have, in truth, caught sight of a nobler realm, whose movements the visible was endeavoring to imitate.

God, who has used the approachable side of humanity in every age, even condescended to be known by the ancient Jew through a priesthood and sacrificial system, a moving tabernacle, a gilded

temple, an unstable ark, or through symbols as meaningless in themselves as the flashing of light from the twelve stones in the "breastplate of judgment" on the Ephod of a priest.

Without some material proof men were unwilling to trust their inward ability to know God. Moses must be startled into attention by the flaming bush, before both feet and head could be bared on holy ground that the voice of God might be heard. Elijah needed the sword of the lightning in the hand of prayer, that he might cut off the head of the false fire-god, Baal, before its devotees could see the true God. The three Hebrew children were wrapped in a burning shroud before the "form of the fourth" could be seen among them. Samson bowed between the pillars of Dagon, and Daniel walked the den of the beasts, that both heathen and Jew might know God.

Not *signs* alone appeared, but Revelation took refuge from defeat in the *dream* at night and the *vision* by day. Following the miraculous signs to Gideon, it required the barley loaf in a Midianite's dream to confirm confidence in the voice of command. It took the dream of the king and Joseph's interpretation of it, to open the dungeon of Egypt, and make possible the preservation of the Canaan

pilgrims, and through them the lineage of the "Lion of Judah." Isaiah saw the vision of Jehovah in the temple, and when the angel took the coal from the altar to touch his lips he received his life commission. Peter heard God speak when the net was thrice lowered. Joshua accepted the leadership of the host when he saw before him the angel with the drawn sword. Abraham communed at his tent door with the divine messengers and believed the promise, and Jacob wrestled all night till the break of day with the angel that he might secure the blessing.

God has allowed the *casting of the lot* to prove His leading, as with Israel at Ai, or in the choosing of Matthias. The lot is a mute prayer to the Deity, and becomes a crime when prostituted from worship for selfish ends, as though a man would use God to further a gambling passion for undeserved gain.

God used the untaught *prophet* to declare His will. The emotion of a prophet was better than a vision or dream, the flash of light, the burning of a furnace, or the control of a beast. It was God's voice in the beginning confidence of a race. These preparatory forms for the final revelation were needed, and are even yet in the stages of individual life, as each for himself must in turn journey from

savagery to civilization. In the "fullness of time" the perfect came. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Personality is the nearest possible approach to humanity. There can be no higher form. No revelation besides could ever be devised so to influence men. It is the approach of intellect to intellect, affection to affection, life to life. We speak it reverently, but God has so pivoted His plan upon the truth in Christ that if this form of approach should fail, the whole moral universe must go into wreck.

In the wider sweep of the world's thought the religions of all nations prepared the way for the revelation in Christ. The ancient Semite in the Valley of Mesopotamia taught the *Eminence* of God, and through the Jew, his noblest scion, preserved God's oneness to the world. The Egyptian taught his *Imminence,* and distributed the thought of God through nature into infinite variety. The Greek sought his *Immanence,* and pleaded that God and man might dwell together. The ages were weary. The religions had exhausted themselves. The nations were eying each other. It was the "fullness of time," the hour of the world's confessed

failure, as well as the culmination of the Divine plan. It was in such an hour of the world's history that Christ was born. He gathered into Himself the prophetic hopes and fears of the race. He came, and became the world's Redeemer. He satisfied the triple demand of the world's thought. He reaffirmed the oneness of the God of the Semites, satisfied the variety of the Egyptian in the Trinity, fulfilled the hope of the Greek in showing God incarnate, and promising to dwell with man forever. He turned away from the wreck of heathen thought, stepped to the vantage ground of its trained intellect, and, by adding the Divine to the stature of a man, lifted faith arm's-length into the light of God. Yes, even better, He stooped to put His shoulder underneath the lowest stratum of human life, and rising in the grandeur of His Divinity has been lifting the lost world up to the throne of God.

The Revelation in Christ is the flashlight from the top of the highest mountain. Better still, it is the light coming over the crest of the range from the bosom of God. It is "the light that lighteth" the world. Through personality we thus enter the realm of the supernatural. As certainly as God said, "The government shall be upon His shoulder,"

the coming of Christ's kingdom is the vindication of the mighty concept of God in the world's redemption. Unless Christ's kingdom succeeds, God's character fails. At the suggestion of such a possibility reason rocks, and the foundations of thought tremble. To what could God or man ever turn if the Christian revelation fails? "There is no other way under heaven or among men." "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The plan of the moral universe itself is a pledge of the incoming of the kingdom. It will not fail. May it soon come in power to the world!

II. Our second proof of certainty lies in the personal character of our Leader, for great leadership is the supreme proof among men of coming victory.

Let us briefly look at Christ as He appeared in His human qualities. We have no likeness of Him left us. For that we are grateful, lest we might worship an image. There are two interesting descriptions at command, attempting to represent the way men remembered him. One is given by Epiphanius, discovered by Tischendorf, and one by Publius Lentulus, a Roman officer. They summarize His appearance as a man of tall stature; ven-

erable countenance, such as to inspire beholders with both love and awe; auburn hair, quite abundant, and beard full; His face round and ruddy; His eyebrows dark and not highly arched; His eyes brown and bright; His aspect terrible in rebuke, placid and amiable in admonition; cheerful without losing gravity; one never seen to laugh. Yet all description fails, just as the emphasis upon the childhood of Christ belittles our conception of Him.

True greatness lies not in appearance, but in character; not in facial nor physical form, but in the hidden depths of the spirit. Let us look at him as He approved Himself among men. He walked from His first sermon in Nazareth to His last pulpit on Calvary, outwardly clad in peasant garb and inly robed in human passion. He congratulates at the wedding, commiserates at the tomb, loves the friendship of Bethany, is jostled and scourged, is weary and must rest, needy and prays, is a man among men. But look again. No policy is ever retracted, no mistake ever made. He forgives, but is not forgiven; is unrepentant, because unsinning; innocent, but not weak; firm, but never vindictive; self-governed and beautiful in the balance of all manly qualities. Himself, drenched with the sorrows of others, the friend of the unfortunate, He

stood unpitied even by His followers in the hour of His crucifixion. Conscious of His mission, and beset by the crowd, the friend of the mob, he is unchecked by praise, unmoved by fear. No trace of self-compliment ever furrowed His face, nor sign of wavering ever muffled His voice. In the enforced isolation of His greatness, He overawed men by the undefined quality of loneliness, communed with angels in their infinite flight, and by the concealed strength of perfect character was fitted the colossal leader of all history.

He was able to control men. See Him, surrounded by His early bodyguard. Twelve men circle His ministry. Peter the impulsive, John the ardent; the two brothers of greatness, Andrew and James; Philip the seeker, Bartholomew the guileless, Thomas the melancholy, Matthew the tax-gatherer, Judas the tax-lover (the only one not a Galilean), James the less, Lebbæus, and Simon the malcontent. They were fishermen, tax-mongers, and "quondam zealots," untaught and unhonored. They seem at first like the lean kine of Pharaoh's dream. Yet the raw material was good. What a vindication of the Savior's judgment of character and management of men, that these, with one exception, in less than three years, through personal

contact, not only learned to stand the test in the hour of trial, but caught a view of the eternal in the face of their leader! What a tribute to His posthumous leadership that these men could be wrought by the fires of persecution into a band of determined, deliberate heralds, the most unflinching of historic heroes; and as time passed devotion became more ardent.

What grasp of intellect that analyzed sin, defined redemption, and gave to the world the only perfect code of morals known to the race! What wealth of revelation that could rock to rest the visible world in the lap of the invisible! What marvelous leadership that could rest the final outcome of his cause on the "inarticulate strength of conscious character," deliberately enter upon the conquest of the world, and in perfect confidence bequeath the problem to the ages! If leadership means victory, the cause of our Christ must compass the earth.

III. The great movements of history since Christ have successively marked the advancing stages of His power.

They are like the waves of the incoming tide of the sea, each succeeding one marking the sand a little farther up the shore. Doctor Pierson said

at the Ecumenical Council: "We can rightly understand history only as we come to know it as *His story.*" Before the advent the object sought was a perfect statement of faith. Since then it has been the application of that faith to the problems of the world. It is not our purpose, in proof of this, to present a detailed statement of the world's victories. We can scarcely flash into relief a single glimpse of the mountain range, whose peaks pierce the clouds, and whose slopes are the drill-ground of the centuries.

The great facts of the Christian revelation are *peace, personal liberty, associated rights, purity,* and *man's knowledge of God.* These are the guide-boards on the wilderness road, pioneered by Christian teaching, and being passed by the nations on their way to perfect life. They outline history, and give the marching plan for the centuries. Though only in part accomplished, they prove the ultimate sway of Him whose unerring thought has thus far been able to move the world.

The Gospel declared *peace* when the whole world believed in war. I am aware that thus far the history of all great movements, that men love to rehearse, has been written in blood. Yet the volumes even now would exchange sizes, if the

achievements of peace were rehearsed with the same zest as the stories of war. The carnage of history has simply been the rioting passion of a retreating or conquering army, looting as it fled or took the field. The love of war is but the remnant of the beast in men, and is unsanctioned by the teaching of Christ. Had zealots been more reasonable, and the apostles of peace more like their Master, who can tell how history, unstung by the vices of war, might have wrought changes as noiseless and unsullied as the turning of night into day? The Gospel is the conquest of the sunlight, not the storm. It has built itself, not with trowel nor pen into mortar or manuscript, a monument or memorial, but into the throbbing thought of men. It has become the living principle of a practical world, nor ever designed force to free the race. Some day peace will be universal.

Personal liberty has been the watch-cry of the pickets along the advance guard of Christian civilization, nor has a chain ever been forged, nor a fagot lighted, by the sanction of the rightly interpreted Word of God. There is not a slave-block bared to the sunlight to-day where Christian teaching dictates. Wherever in savagery it remains it is doomed to burn under the focused rays of Chris-

tian light. England with her colonies, Russia with her serfs, and America with her slaves, attest the growth of Christian liberty, that will yet set the whole world free. *Growing liberty* wrested from King John *Magna Charta,* sent Cromwell with his iron will to demand for England civil liberty, lifted honest John Bright and Wilberforce into the love of civilization, set on fire the eloquent tongue of O'Connell, and made Lincoln at home among God's chosen heroes, the foremost man of his century.

Governments are becoming freer, wrongs are being righted, and the world growing better every hour. Though all men will not unite in one government, nor in one form of government, yet the spirit of freedom will find its way into every code among the nations, and America prove to have set the model for the world.

Christianity would dot the hills and valleys of every land with schools and colleges, develop man in moral symmetry, make him feel of kin to his Maker, and send him shouting "liberty" on his way to eternal life.

When Christ came He flashed the thought of *associated rights* upon the clouds of despotism, and, though long delayed, we believe the world is now moving toward His ideal. The sphere of human

action was defined by the Savior in the burning light of related rights. No man now "can live to himself." It is the day of *applied* religion. Men to-day who follow Christ must not be content with "taking up a cross," but must "go about doing good." That maudlin sentiment that wastes itself alone in impractical tears is to-day banished of right from good society. We want the tears now that can float a ship, the rivers of pleasure that can carry the commerce of Christ's unseen kingdom to the doomed of the race. In Christian countries the social and economic problems are cast to the surface and must be solved. The adjustment of rights between capital and labor is but another step on that ladder from mire to manhood that Christ's teaching would build. It is not bread, nor blood, but equality of opportunity that men want, and *will have*. The Church is called to introduce the "Golden Rule" into the practical life of the working world. No industrial system is Christian, nor can it be final, that makes possible the unequal gain of equal brain as seen in the organized "trusts" in Christian countries to-day, whether of steel or beef, oil or sugar, or in the hundred and one "get-rich-quick" schemes that flame the passion for gain, or in the gambling "in futures" in a New York or a

Chicago, where designing men wager a fictitious wealth on the movements of the Almighty. Here is the most intense and practical field for the Church, known to peaceful civilization. The spirit of the opening years of the century is the nearest approach the world has ever made to the thought of Christ in the rights of men. We rejoice in the signs of the times. It is either a nation going to Cuba to free the wronged, or sending the light to a distant Philippines to help undo the evil of a false Christian teaching. It is a President (Heaven protect him!) advocating a returned indemnity to build schools in China, or the world's representatives pledging fealty to a Hague Tribunal. The wider application is the one more easily made and must be first. Afterward will come the minuter adjustments in the affairs of our industrial life. It begins with the top, as the sun does with the mountain peaks, but will gradually illumine the valleys and the whole world be ushered into the day. In all the questions of associated life it is the wealth of human rights that is in the balance, and God is watching the tipping of the beam.

Christ's ideals of *purity in religion,* in *personal character,* and His teaching of a *personal knowledge of God,* were like waifs on the highway when

first given to the world, but now are accepted throughout Christendom, and will yet possess the race.

Wherever Christ's teaching has gone cruelty has departed from worship and human life been made sacred. No longer is the sacrificial stone deluged with human blood as in Mexico, a wife burned on a funeral pyre as in India, or the honor of womanhood offered on a heathen altar as was done in ancient Greece.

It has been hard for man to ascend from ceremony to self-conquest, and live purity rather than to simply chant it. Yet we believe, despite all depression to the contrary, that there never was a time when principle was more valued, love better defined, faith more firm, and man's knowledge of God more direct than to-day. Through pride, parade, and man's love of power, religion has fared ill through the ages, and has oft had need of being rescued from the hands of its friends. Yet never, in the world's history, were so many men, in the average of opportunity, true as at this hour. There have been great and periodic revivals, so that the Church, like the pendulum, has returned to purity, and each time the hands have marked a higher figure on the face of the clock. The moods of religion are simply the manifestations of tempera-

ment, nor do they touch the truer life. One age is more meditative, another more demonstrative, and another more practical. Are the less demonstrative converts of to-day, because younger, less true than those of years ago! How could the child, born on the journey to Bethel, be as emotional at the altar as the penitent Jacob, seeking Bethel a second time? Outward emotion is one of the fashions of religion. It is simply a question whether it is setting in or out; yet the inner fervor of love, the loyalty to principle, the direct knowledge of God, these are as abiding as life itself. We believe the world is moving toward a great revival, and the power of love that has graced the life of far-off Australia will yet circle the world. At this very hour the angel is troubling the waters, and Wales is stepping in. Will not God give America a chance, too? Let us get to the edge of the pool! God's love is free to all alike. It is as the refreshing dew of the night on every land, revealed in the early sunlight of each succeeding hour of the earth's round. All nations alike shall yet rejoice in His life. The spirit that renewed Rome, transformed the tribes of Germany, France, and Spain, molded Anglo-Saxon England into power, bridged the sea and lifted America to the vantage point of history, will not "fail nor be discouraged till Christ shall

have set judgment in the earth," and the waiting isles have seen His law. Each age is set to carve some new feature on the face of the world's civilization, and that face shall yet bear the likeness of the face of God in Christ.

The fiat of the Almighty has gone forth, that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Let the faltering take courage, and the defenseless be armed. The man of Nazareth is among His followers. His kingdom will never fail. He who declared the supremacy of mind, and taught man to stamp his foot on the clod of the hill-top, will not fail to make the earth His footstool. He who used a carpenter's plane and a builder's hammer to frame a hut in Nazareth, will not fail to build a house in the Eternal City. He who pleaded His cause in power at the bar of justice and redeemed the race, will not fail to make good His claim on the consciences of men. He exalted character to the place of power, made Himself its "flying goal," taught man to love God, and made a perfect man the climax of the universe. The Man of Galilee has been girding Himself through the centuries for the final conquest, and is now on His way to universal power. Let men everywhere plan for the coronation! And may His kingdom speedily come!

II.

OUR SONSHIP.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."—JOHN I, 12.

THE great question of the ages has not been, Does God exist; but, How may man be conscious of his Maker. No system of thought nor definition of faith will ever hold permanent sway over the intellect, nor dominate the affections of men, which fails to make man's conscious relationship to God its central feature. In this day of "applied Christianity," we are so concerned with battle-ships and parade drills in the militant Church that the danger is the vital question back of all armaments may be forgotten, which is the soul's conscious relationship to its God. Methodism's rise was the resurrection of experimental religion. It followed the Baconian method, and, by accepting known facts, built up, in harmony with experience and the Word of God, a system of belief whose unrivaled splendor has charmed the world. As Methodists, our herit-

age of "experience" is not to be lightly cast aside, nor the field forsaken in the hour when the better part of Christendom is re-echoing the call to conscious godliness.

Before building our cabin, let us clear away the underbrush.

Our text sweeps the universe in its first stroke in the statement, "He came to His own," not to the Jews, but to carnal men, deftly declaring the impartial plan of the Son of God. It announces the need of purposed faith in the phrase "As many as received Him." It offers the bequest of "power to become" to every believer, and welcomes man to the opening gate of the city of God. The word "power," here used, is not that inherent, divinely created Pentecostal ability, construed in the gifts of the early Church, promised in Acts i, 8: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." It is not the *authority* announced in the last of Matthew in the great commission, "All power is given unto me. Go ye, therefore." Nor is it the *strength* intended in Rev. v, 12, in the ascription to Christ in the midst of the artillery of Revelation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power." It is rather that *rightful claim* which gives every honest seeker the absolute *right*

to a place in the family of God. We thus stand face to face with the assured and blessed Sonship of our text.

Let us locate the province of this new life and relationship.

The *kingdom of morality* does not define the vital fact of the kingdom of God. The Christian is moral, but the moral man need not necessarily be a Christian. When the young man came to Christ asking how he might gain eternal life, the Savior sounded the death knell of the moralist. He might have been a disciple, and possibly known as one of the Savior's body-guard in the ages, but is now simply the indefinite rich young man. When told to "keep the commandments," the assured answer of the moralist, "I have," did not prevent the Savior's piercing gaze from analyzing his thought. He desired to add God's kingdom to his own. Cutting with a single stroke through the shell of religion to find the kernel, Christ said, "Sell all and give," as much as to say, "Set your affections," not upon money, but upon Me.

The *province of philanthropy* is not the definition of religion, though it may compass good citizenship. Paul said in his letter to Corinth, "Though," with martyr sincerity, "I bestow all my

goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

Ritualism does not define religion. The Savior, when discoursing upon the kingdom, dissected the unspiritual ritualist for the ages to view the hideous skeleton, and declared with the awful intensity of an offended Deity, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom."

Experimental religion lies not on the surface of the sea, but in the deep ocean's quiet, our hidden life with God. There is a conscious relationship of the soul with its Maker, which becomes at once the life of pleasure and the secret of power. If any doubt this truth, we ask him to stand in the footprints of the departing Nicodemus and take up the contention with the Son of God.

It is not our province to-day to prove the Scriptural promise of Sonship. This we accept. It is rather to lay bare, if possible, the qualities of this new life, and make more plain the ways of God with men.

Accepting the fact that "the kingdom of God is within," we seek to analyze the movements of the mind and affectionate nature when consenting to the new law of life. Faith does not contemplate

the eradication of either of these natures, but to aid them to right exercise and self-control. The processes of grace are not unnatural, though supernatural. Creeds are the effort to define in set phrase the changing inner life of man under the influence of grace. Men differ, so will their definitions. And even the same language varies through every new mental prism. How reasonable the remark of the gifted L. D. McCabe, when writing on the subject of holiness: "I found that all the light which I had previously received, whether from reading, instruction, or meditation, was inadequate to the demands of my own reason, and also to answer the numerous inquiries propounded to me by my discriminating pupils. Unsatisfied with all I had ever seen or heard in explanation of its unexplained mysteries, I sat down, not to reading and collating, but to patient and prayerful thought." We sympathize with the feeling so fully that, even when reading Wesley's "Plain Account," luminous as it is, we have wished he had used the comparative degree in the title instead of the positive. No man can fully define to another what to him the kingdom of God truly is. There are heights of rapture and depths of anguish—yes, even facts of common experience—that are forever hidden, like the

night from the sun. They lie on the side of nature never laid bare to the gaze of men. We do well, however, to compare experiences, and, as best we may be able, draw our conclusions.

The ground of the demerit of sin is the lack of perfect consent to the law of God. It is that inner dissent to the restraint upon thought and emotion that would deny them all exercise excepting toward the good. The vagrant soul, thus driven by the remorse attendant upon purposed rebellion, knocks for entrance at the city's gate. It is not ours to inquire to-day as to the steps that led it to leave the old life, nor to explain the elements of conviction, nor to analyze the faith that makes possible the acceptance of the new, but rather to note the facts that go to make up the real character of this new life upon which it enters. The mental and affectionate processes are unchanged in conversion. These processes are, however, now directed to moral instead of selfish ends, and the inner nature takes cast from the object toward which it is directed. There are seven facts of this new life which, we trust, will not only aid in the definition of our sonship, but also lead some one into a better understanding of self and into a more contented life. It is with the windows thrown open heavenward, and

with a devout prayer for light, that we would enter upon the statement.

I. The first settled fact of this new relationship to God through faith, is *the renouncing of every malevolent passion and the acceptance of God's law as an absolute and perfect guide.* This is the life of principle. This binding law is found in the revealed Word and the Spirit's further interpretation of it. As the wanderer stands knocking at the gate, the keeper will exact the pledge of absolute loyalty before entrance can be given, even to the most destitute. Whenever one comes face to face with the demand of the new law upon both thought and affection, he stands at the supreme place of opportunity in this universe. If he assents, by faith thereafter in Christ, to live this life, the gate swings open, and he steps in. The act of consent is the one which crosses the threshold into the kingdom of God. This kingdom of principle is vital in the definition of our sonship. It is the very hinge itself of the gate of entrance. Whether in torrid clime or frozen hut, in teeming city or deserted wilderness, in temple or cloister, the seeker steps into the favor of God in the very act of such decision. We can not too strongly demand that every professed Christian shall not only be free from profanity, adultery,

idolatry; free from complicity with the lie, the theft, the conceit of society, or the corner in the great marts of trade; but free from avarice, ambition, malice, deceit, and that horde of malevolent passions that blister and blight and curse the very elect. Let every pretentious hypocrite, whose pious cant is belied by his vindictive or vicious life, be gibbeted on the scaffold of Christian respect. "Thou shalt not!" rings from every stone of the divinely chosen pulpit of Sinai, and the new law, the sounding-board of that ancient peak, sends it echoing through the ages to the final judgment hall. I would, even now, some one within this call would take the needed step. The ten thousand pleading tongues of mercy are crying, "Come!" "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come;" while the inspired apostle, in the name of the Nazarene, flings this challenge of privileged sonship to all the world.

II. The second fact is the one of *conscious Divine power to live the new life.* The knowledge of need with the upright in soul is as keen as the pang of hunger to the famishing, and the sense of help as definite as returning life to failing health. The doubter may ask, How can we be *conscious* of God with us? This no man can fully explain to another. As features upon the face, so words upon

thought may ill express the nobility within. Titles to farms are recorded in court records. The title to the inheritance of the kingdom of God is written in the deeper consciousness of the man who claims it. I may not be able to explain how God's Spirit touches my spirit; yet *I know it.* Nor does the explanation of that lie with the believer except when addressing the one who denies the possibility of all spirit impression. How one spirit affects another I do not know, nor am I called to explain; for the question resolves itself into the problem, How can any spirit be conscious of any other spirit? The question is one of mental philosophy that lies at the door of any system that affirms a knowledge of spirit contact. A denial of this is only the right of the materialist, who is behind the age. He is only a monument, and we have been taught to be silent in the presence of the dead. How the impact of God's Spirit upon man's spirit can be known is beyond all philosophy to explain, yet to him who admits the testimony of his conscious inner life it is most blessedly true. Outward religion is the circle, man's knowledge of God is the center. Nor has mind found a resting place until returning, like the dove to the ark, to the thought of the personal consciousness of God in man.

III. The third fact we note is *an inwrought repulsion for sin, and a corresponding love of purity.* This might almost seem at first to antedate the consent to live the new life. When the soul stands knocking at the gate, the emotion is one of penitence. With every new reflection, conviction deepens. The storm increases, until the soul is drenched in the passion of remorse. Out of that hour there is born of the very lightning of the wrath of offended justice an aversion to sin, that strengthens with every new view of the life of purity. Yet in strict thought there is a wide distinction between the emotion of conviction, which is the revelation in us of what God thinks of sin, and the settled disgust in the soul for sin independent of its final penalty upon the guilty. The first precedes the new life; the second is the ever-present guardian of it. Sometimes we hear the earnest pleader rehearse his life of crime with such relish that the question arises whether he has ever truly repented. If God is willing to forget my sins, shall not I be glad to do the same? A soul genuinely converted to God hates sin and loves holiness. These two blessed facts attend the righteous in his journey of the years, the ever-ministering angels of help, till finally they meet like the cherubim over the ark, with wings touching,

but faces in opposite directions, looking back toward the world and forward toward God, while the Shekinah rests down upon the altar of the soul, and God hallows it in perfect love.

IV. There is a province of *motive,* which alone gives quality to action. This is our fourth fact. It lies over life like the sun on this material universe, revealing every act to the eye of God. We are glad to believe that God judges men's deeds by their motives; not, as with men, their motives by their deeds. What a leveler of humanity this is! A rich man may lay his millions upon poverty's altar, and thousands of ill-fed, cellar-housed weaklings walk into the sunlight. Yet if done for self-praise, the richness of his gift only abounds in the deeper poverty of his own spirit. On the other hand, if honest penury would lay its loving tribute at the feet of the Redeemer, the very breath of pure desire will become the angel of worship to transmute the copper of earth into the gold of the kingdom. It is not, however, for a single motive we plead, but a habit of motive that will settle into disposition. This is essential to the thought of purity. When this shall be an accomplished fact it will hallow the visible life and make it like the great organ, whose key-board presents a succession of endless combi-

nation. Each outward act is but the signal to awaken the note in the invisible world of worship. Every deed finds echo in the unseen, the visible awakening the invisible, two worlds in quick response,—the first the natural life of contact with men, the second the life of truer contact with the nature of God. The most sublime spectacle in this universe is an immortal soul struggling for purity, its motives gathered from the unseen, stifling the fires of passion, and hurling headlong the powers of hell.

V. There is a kingdom of *benevolent desire,* which follows close upon the act of consecration. Not long since, while appealing to the unsaved to accept Christ, a man in the audience was deeply convicted of sin. Starting forward, he sank down at the altar, trembling from head to foot, and cried for help. Soon the answer came. No sooner had the light broken through than he arose in his place, the tear of repentance cast through with the sunlight of his first faith, and, turning to his four companions, led them all to Christ. This was the true impulse of a saved soul. The missionary spirit that saves the first soul that crosses its path is but the beginning of that world-wide sympathy that gives, and prays, and grapples the world to lift it into the

light of God, and is unquenched except in the redemption of the race. In a semi-Jeremiah mood we ask whether the Church to-day has that same deathless anguish for the souls of men that gave the mighty swing of victory to earlier Methodism. For it we should pray and plead till salvation would grace again in power our altars, and a wayward race receive the new life of the Son of God.

VI. No sooner will one enter this new realm of moral activity than a *sense of absolute dependence upon God will be awakened.* A single glimpse of the inexorable working of the relentless moral machinery of this universe would appall the soul, unaided by grace, and crush forever beginning hope. Fear would be its companion, and death its doom. But faith sees, in the center of all, the benign face of a loving Creator, whose proffered help awaits the humble mind. To the one depending upon God, life becomes a series of triumphs. Every new victory leads to greater confidence, and every accomplished act to a more settled dependence upon God. That *sense of dependence* is the consecrated standing ground of faith, the kneeling ground of prayer, the building ground of character, and the resting ground for the ark of Israel's God.

VII. In defining the inner facts of our sonship

we have noted, in turn, the renouncing of passion and the acceptance of principle, the consciousness of Divine help, the repulsion for sin and love for virtue, the prompting of right motive, the benevolent desire, and the sense of dependence. We now come to the blessed *consciousness of a Divine companionship, the contact with a person, the knowledge of a friend.* This conscious friendship of Christ is the climax of our sonship in God.

There is a sense of loneliness that belongs to contemplative life, when the soul reviews the facts of destiny, and sees the sublime tragedy of existence. Nor is any thinking mind exempt. In the hour of meditation man feels that he walks on the rim of a fathomless universe. One step on either side would precipitate him where reason would lose its reckoning. That sense of danger, that fear of falling, that awful foreboding, that wreck of hope, is the most exquisite torture of which a well-meaning soul can be continually conscious. Not only does the guilty soul, as is recorded of Thomas Paine, fear to be alone, but with the good the craving for companionship is a passion as deep as life, as abiding as eternity. How tender is confiding childhood! When weary of play, or perplexed in study, the problems unsolved, the reason for toil unknown, the evening

gathering or the storm brewing, just to nestle in her arms or look in her face, and see love mirrored in mother's eyes! Her cheek and your cheek played "hide and seek" with the lips, each in turn love's playground. You did not need her, but you just wanted to know that she was there. That was all. The artillery could roll, and the earth rock. While she held you, there was no fear. What are we but children grown?—no, growing? The sphere is wider, simply making our childhood greater. We must have *Him* with us. It is the resistless passion for friendship, divine, eternal friendship.

The agony of repentance over, the touch of forgiveness felt, wrong repelled, right received, dependent, strengthened, the nature of God impressed, His presence known,—the perfume of a nearing paradise through the opening windows,—this is life, salvation, SONSHIP!

III.

THE WILL, THE PIVOT OF DESTINY.

"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself."—JOHN VII, 17.

OUR text is a Klondike. You can placer-mine it, or sink a shaft. Whether you look in or around, it glistens with the gold of the Kingdom. The Savior came unheralded to the Tabernacle feast, walked in October odors among withering booths and shriveling men, scanned the devout, curious crowd with its malicious leaders, then repaired to the side room of the temple to set forth the claims of His kingdom of truth.

He suffered in that hour the isolation of greatness. His own brothers did not believe upon Him as the Son of God until after the resurrection. Why should they? He was their brother, and they were not divine. They knew Him. And to this day to know men makes them common.

Our text announces four great related truths,

to the last of which alone we ask special attention to-day.

1. He declares that a man may know the "teaching," by which we understand, in its wider inference, all revealed truth is involved.

2. Man may know "whether it be of God," that is the source of that truth; namely, its inspiration.

3. The phrase, "or whether I speak from Myself," mirrors in its depths the Messiahship of Christ as the authoritative Teacher of God. Nor is the recognition of this simply of abstract nature, but a confession wrought out of the inner depths of an experimental knowledge of Christ's presence in the soul.

4. The blazing sunlight from the Savior's face on the three mountain peaks of the text is the expression, "If any man wills," and locates in man's consent the question of salvation. This brings us face to face with the fact that *the will is the pivot of destiny*. Human experience also proves that that pivot will be both tear-stained and blood-oiled before the soul will turn upon it to its God. The Savior declares that if any man wills to make incarnate God's will he shall know in vital experience the inmost truth of our Christian faith. This is the most sublime analysis of personal salvation ever

left upon human record. With all the authority of the Infinite the Savior flashes the light of a coming world upon this mighty truth. Then, gazing in the divine ardor of His mission to all ages, over the heads of the motley crowd before Him, with the side room of the temple for His pulpit, the arches of the October heavens for His sounding board, He sends echoing through the centuries the eternal demand that men shall believe upon the Son of God.

There are two sides to the great plan of redemption,—one where God seems to do all; the other where man seems supreme. It is this, the underside of the great problem, we now seek to study. The question is most vital, how shall I enter the kingdom of God? Then, when admitted, how shall I gain the divine help for the more complete domination of my soul by the grace of God? The creeds have told us how God dealt with men, and have defined beyond recall the process of personal salvation. Yet creeds are man-made, and therefore subject to change. We believe in creeds, yet the immediate reasons for the emphasis of a creed will gauge both the form of the statement and the peculiar effect upon the believer. That which seems vital in one theological battle is unneeded armor in another. A coat of mail turned the dart or dulled

the spear, but of what use is it in turning a twelve-inch ball from a Krupp gun? A crown is a symbol of power when on the king's head, but in a land of liberty it is only a brilliant jest. In strict truth, a creed can alone be known in the stress of like passion with that which wrought it into form. Yes, even more, human definitions are so indigenous that it is a just question whether, when transplanted, the flower can ever cast the same pungent perfume that the first bloom flung to its native air. The Articles of Religion of all Protestantism are set in the anti-Catholic mold. They were a rebellion against the sublime egotism of a would-be all-wise ecclesiasticism. That same urgency is not upon us now, but in its place the newer need, in the world-wide brotherhood of united Christendom. In this new century we sometimes feel the need of the Church is a bicentennial resurrection of John Wesley, or a new statement of doctrine. Yet it is the same blessed power, the same salvation, the same mighty truth that re-echoed in the shouts of our fathers.

The province of our subject lies not so much in what holiness is, as how are we to attain it. The unnatural is no part of a perfect creed, although the supernatural is fundamental in it. God's first revelation to man was through human reason, nor does

He ever violate, in the details of its specifications, the ground plan in the architecture of the moral universe. Our definition of religion must be rational, or the thoughtful world will class the unnaturally supernatural as the superstitious. While we believe in special acts made necessary by moral ends, yet we think of the accustomed divine power, not as given through what is termed *special providence,* but *particular providence;* not a profligate use of divine aid according to spasmodic whims, but a momentary and ever fixed help to every man alike, if he comes into touch with the great center of power at any trolley-point of contact. In answer to that touch it will distribute in the soul in light, heat, and power. In the matter of salvation the spiritual forces are set in great and fixed lines of movement which must be appropriated by the will.

The "school of necessity" has limited the will to prescribed lines. A less severe definition has limited it only by impediments within the mind. Whedon justly denominates these as the freedom of the clock to strike. The fact is it must strike twelve when the hands point to twelve; that is all it can do. But we contend that the will may strike ten when the hands point to twelve, or may refuse to strike at all. The will is supreme, either in assent or dissent

from the other qualities of reasonable intellect. It turns on its own axis. The soul, by native endowment, may turn in recoil from the appeals of its Maker, or from every reasonable motive and judgment of the intellect or prompting of the affections, or may make the very pleasure of willfulness itself a motive of choice. It may pervert destiny till, helpless, it stands accursed at the bar of Eternal Justice, awful in its ruined grandeur, yet doomed through settled will to endless inward conflict, which is condemnation, which is hell.

The more we are in accord with the natural movements and exercises of human nature, the more we approach the divine ideal. We believe the ideal of perfection is centered in man himself. In other words, the highest Scriptural idea of perfection is a perfect man, perfectly free to do as he pleases, yet free from penalty through perfect obedience to the law of liberty, which is the law of God.

There is a province of our text where the will is related to knowledge,—"he shall know." Yet that knowledge implies, in its ultimate thought, the inner consciousness of the mission of the Son of God. We, therefore, more properly confine our thought to the question of the will as related to our self-conquest and our surrender to God.

1. *The will is the responsible agent in overcoming temptation.* No sooner is this statement made than we are confronted with the first broken bridge over which our armored-train would move in vanquishing sin. The drunkard is not able to will his reformation, the libertine his returning purity, the profane his worshipful thought. Many a soul has wrought in the death-throes against long-established temptation until overwhelmed in shame, every nerve a firebrand and every pore a pleading tongue. Then, with renewed strength made desperate by unwilling defeat, the love of purity now curdled into the gall of self-distrust, the soul fired with abandoned hate, the awful menace of virtue against sin removed, we have seen that soul in the wild deluge of its passion fling itself full length against all that was good, and, shrieking in its awful moral delirium, fall back into the gashed and lurid grave of a moral hell. He is powerless now to stop the toboggan slide perditionward, which is but the relentless swing of penalty. But there was a time when he might have sent the cup and not himself hellward, and have said in the grandeur of heroic manhood—No! Objects of sight enter the mind unbidden. Choruses greet the ear unsought. Temptations flood the soul unselected. But the will may refuse to entertain the

unbidden, or converse with the unsought. The soul may be tossed helpless on Galilean waves, but the will may awake the sleeping Savior, who will command the hounds of the sea to lie at His feet. If in descending the mine I refuse the "miner's lamp," and despite all protests, use a tallow taper, when the accounts appear in the daily print I am properly numbered among the suicides.

Proud, unbending, stubborn human nature, like the brakeman, heedless of the pendant guard-ropes, approaching the low arching bridge, will break itself against the immovable bridgeway of the Eternal. Submission is the first and absolute demand of the new law.

2. *The soul may often will itself out of the immediate realm of evil.* Weak human nature needs to exclude itself so far as possible from the field of temptation. How beautiful the prayer we all pray, "Lead us not into temptation!" The drunkard, when beyond the reach of drink, can extinguish the fires of hell within him, even though, when he thinks himself within its reach, the lurid flames of the damned will again course through his abandoned nature. A man can abide the fulfillment of his oath, though at the end of the time he seems absolutely powerless before his foe.

3. The true secret of overcoming is deeper than the surface conditions. *It lies in the inner, determined purpose by the help of God to live a life of honor.* Some time since I went into a bank in company with the banker, who showed me the new vault. He picked up a roll of bills marked $12,000, and put in my right hand. He then put $5,000 in my left,—$17,000 are a deal for a Methodist preacher to have in his hands at one time! Think you there was any temptation to take the money? Possibly some one says, "No, for the law would then have taken hold of you." But think you that was the ground of not so attempting? As you would do, I would scorn the thought. Years before ascending those bank steps there was a consultation and an agreement with my Maker in which I said, "Henceforth no dollar, not properly my own, do I desire." The question of honesty was settled long years before ascending those bank steps, settled in a quiet hour of communion with God.

A man becomes virtuous when he consents to purity of thought, not simply life. He banishes himself forever from the forbidden realm of unchastity. He consents to the absolute law of virtue, —and temptation at once dwarfs to a cringing coward before him.

The blistering, blighting, damning crime of indecision stamps the face with maudlin weakness, tunnels the constitution with the fires of disease, and wraps the soul in horrid remorse. The most revolting sight in this moral universe is an immortal nature, made in the image of God, parading to the world the unconcealed penalty of its crime.

4. *The will gauges the extent of our surrender to God.*

No man ever failed to enter the kingdom who honestly said, "I will," even though through misunderstanding he sorrowed as though his salvation were not, like mourning Jacob for Joseph yet alive.

There has been great confusion in much of our evangelistic preaching, and, therefore, revival experience, touching the method and result of the inward workings of Divine grace. Purity has seemed a material quantity, whose possession displaced nature, rather than a new activity of nature in its relation to sin, that required constant action to be maintained. The grace of sanctification has been urged as something different from the grace of regeneration, and as destroying nature rather than holding in check or directing the activities of the soul to new and proper objects. How to gain and then maintain a life of complete consecration has

been the ill-understood question of the Christian life. It is Divine ability that saves, but the process of God's power in man's salvation will be through the accustomed abilities of the soul, central in which is the will. It is God who saves. But it is God saving by enlightening through the intellect, inspiring through the affections, determining through the will. The passive condition of man's moral nature as related to salvation is the Calvinistic menace, masquerading in an Arminian garb, that has wrought havoc at many an altar of consecration. Sin and holiness are states in which the soul purposely lives, and in which the activities of mind and affection are exerted. While Divine aid must ever accomplish the change from the one state to the other, as well as keep in holiness when once instated, yet the will must act as though it did all, and exert its same power in the same inward process, but with new aim and benevolent purpose. The will is the shift-key that turns the current along the electric wires of our mental machinery, whose incandescent coils, laid by the foresight of Infinite intellect in the inner chambers of the soul, will be coursed and charged from the great central dynamo, till the thoughts, motives, and affections will

glow and radiate in beauty, the New Testament Shekinah.

A careful analysis of the steps in submission will show that each new victory, helping in the sum of our perfect consecration, will follow directly the exercise of the will for that particular end. The soul theoretically might, but probably never will, gain in a single moment, at any altar of search, the full dominion of all carnal passion. It will as far as it knows to ask, but the asking is limited by the knowledge of need. It will conquer itself by inches, and be sanctified in steps, and not by one all-convulsive surrender to God. It is God alone who saves, but through the active exercise of man's abilities, and not in their passive submission. The soul is renewed in as many ways and times as there are separately apprehended departments of conscious activity. Such sanctification is not the even, gradual advance of the body when walking, but of the foot that stops and advances in quick process, for faith is always intelligent, definite, and instantaneous in its action, and must be here. What the soul did at the altar was to pledge that every possessed ability would be brought by it to the kingdom. Its purpose was as complete in the first sur-

render, attested in regeneration by the Spirit's witness, as it could ever be. The circle was complete, though the radius was short. The first newly found joy grew out of the consciousness of complete surrender; nor can that purpose be more complete in heaven itself. By it the wanderer stepped into the kingdom. The soul, by God's provision and direct help, having compassed its aim through one supreme, willful act into this beginning holiness, it now remains for it, by holy acts of this hallowed will to prostrate in turn every newly revealed ability at the same chosen altar of consecration. Thus, and only thus, will every separate Napoleon, whose conquering battalions have again and again swept through the fields of the soul, reconquering and reburning the signs of a new life, find its Waterloo.

Is there one among us who dares testify that the will must not forever police the mind's inner powers, or that after the first supreme struggle that brought the "witness," he was not still harassed by a guerilla warfare, from whose undiscovered mountains the flying marauding bands swept down under cover of the night to devastate, and to retire uncaptured, and to replenish their forces from the local rebellions against authority that arose in the submitted provinces of the soul! The soul will no

sooner have entered the new life of desire and determination than the lack of a confirmed habit of the new purpose will react, and, unless help shall come, the old habit will displace the new. This is the after-struggle of every new birth of the soul. Consecration waits upon our knowledge of need; nor do we gain victories unless we definitely seek them. The contest for perfection is repeated and definite. The first was for general consent; now it is for definite self-conquest. One sees, for example, for the first time, the difference between indignation against sin and anger without a cause. He did not know before as now what God requires. He sees in turn that envy, rashness, stubbornness, unhallowed ambition, and the allied hosts of sinister foes were unsubdued in the first proclamation of peace. The first great battle was for the dominion of the new law and was fought within the territory of the partially discovered soul. The *combined* army was routed and shattered. Yet each tribe and clan betook itself to its native hills, to await the issue when the will, conducting the Holy Spirit to the haunts of the bandits, should seek to join battle with them, and wrench from them final assent to the peaceful reign of the new law. He summons the ungoverned forces of his nature, and at the altar

strips them of armor, lance, and license, denies them forever the realm of ungoverned passion, and makes them take the oath of perpetual self-restraint.

Some day he will see the need of a rest of faith, whose related influence touches and hallows every act of life. He had never before met the foe of discontent in the open where battle could be joined. He weeps. He prays. He trusts. And there enters a hallowed harmony that seems like the music of heaven.

Let us change our figure, and say that the first supreme purpose in conversion was the hub of our chariot wheel. The new lines of conquest will be the spokes, each of which is sent into place by a definite act of the will. The "rest of faith" will be the tire thrown round all in the expanding heat of agonizing appeal to God, and binding all the rest in firm consecration. The God-ward and man-ward sides will give us both wheels for our chariot, bearing between them the sustained life of godliness. To this chariot we will harness the two steeds of faith and love. Isaiah in the thirty-fifth chapter, throws up the highway in earth's wilderness. John in the Apocalypse flings wide the gate at the end of the race, to stand the shouting angels a receiv-

ing cohort before the throne—and heaven alone can tell us the rest.

The Son of God stands gazing into the hearts of men, awaiting man's will in the redemption of the race. The sacred interests of two worlds depend upon it. He called from the feast. He appealed from Gethsemane. He cried from Calvary. He commands from the throne!

IV.

THE PRICE OF LIFE.

"If by the spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—Rom. viii, 13.

Our text is both a grave digger and a herald of life. It says man must die, if he would live. The first is needed that the second may abide. The dirge precedes the declaration of life. In preparation for it each man must prepare his own shroud, purchase his own coffin, and furnish himself for burial. There is no pomp, no parade to distract the mind and make agreeable the doom. The friends may weep, if weep they will, without the gate. The chamber of this sacrifice knows no companionship. Each one "dies to himself." It is the sublime tragedy of sin, where each man dies alone; and all who would truly live must pass through this chamber of death. But it is the Spirit of God that chants the requiem, calls to life, and that flashes the light of a new world into the risen soul. He who will follow the teaching of the text will arise, facing the east, with the sun

upon his forehead, and all heaven awaiting to escort him in the immortal journey.

Sometimes when I have looked upon life it has seemed to me that the world is a great thrashing-machine. Some men are applying the power, some are feeding the cylinder, and some are being fed into it. The inequalities are great; yet, as death is known as the great leveler in nature, so is the spiritual death in the economy of divine grace. The one levels down. This levels up.

In presenting this repulsive, yet magnetic, secret of spirit resurrection into the image of God, we would that this room might prove to be the slope of Hermon, where some expectant believer, who has trudged the mountain path to find the Son of God, may see Him transfigured in beauty. There are many who would be willing to die, that they might live, if only the journey to death was made more plain. How may I die, is as vital as who will help me to live. May the angel accompany us, yes, Christ be with us at this hour, and lead in the tortuous, torturing, yet triumphant path!

No man ever enters the kingdom of God who is unwilling to pay the price. But no man ever consents to the call of Christ, and takes up the cross on the Calvary road who can be barred thereafter from

the friendship of the Son of God; and to know Him is life. Paul declares in Romans, in the very midst of that most magnificent argument in inspired record: "If by the spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye will live;" not *shall* live, but *will* live. It is not the determined purpose of a legal compulsion, but the announcement of a conclusion that in the government of God is already assured, if the conditions are met. Ye then *will* live. With the assurance of such a prediction, we enter with hope upon the thought immediately before us.

We are not to-day concerned with the definition of what the kingdom of God is; nor is our inquiry alone into the nature of that first repentance that leads into life, but into the wider sweep of that sacrifice which is essential to life, both at the beginning and in its continued course in the after years. Our task is the question of obtaining spiritual life. What is the price? What must I do to gain it? We would, if possible, ascend the stairway to the door of the temple, and though not expecting to enter, knock aright, that the angel of the covenant may assure us of our right to enter.

The key to our text is the mission of sacrifice. In seeking to develop this thought we would view it in five different realms: *Renunciation, self-re-*

straint, submission to the higher law, unselfish labor, and submission to the Providence of God. However, before defining these realms of our surrender to God, we desire to note two things: *first,* the setting of our text in the argument; and, *second,* the method of our surrender.

To know one you must know his friends. We therefore would briefly acquaint ourselves with the general thoughts preceding our text. The whole argument in Romans is like the mountain range in the moonlight. It marks in Revelation the line where earth and sky meet. Our text seems to stand where God and men commune.

Paul's primary aim in Romans is not to teach salvation by faith, though that afterward, in the architecture of his argument, becomes the pillar supporting the very roof of the temple. It is to set forth God's universal purpose in man's salvation. He declares that all men alike may enter the kingdom if they will but believe. As he advances in the truth, distasteful to the predestinarian Jew, but most welcome to the less violent Gentile, he sweeps his artillery down from the mountains out on the wide-open field where he may join issue and give battle to every narrow instinct of human nature. The salvation offered is universal. Its re-

wards are equal. Its penalties are impartial. Every one must die who would live, and every one who thus dies *will* live. The universal implication of our text, in accord with the intent of the great argument itself, is like a jeweled necklace around the life of the world. Thank God, "whosoever will may come." But wait! We are concerned in the added call now, whosoever will may come *to death.* Yes! if he would gain life, he must come.

Not only is the early part of the book of Romans radiant with the right of all to a universal opportunity, but Christ appears as the universal Savior, with universal power over sin. How marvelous the declarations in the sixth chapter of man's absolute deliverance through Christ from sin. The seventh chapter is descriptive of an awakened, though unconverted man, until its closing verse, where the light breaks through. We wish that no division, except the punctuation of a sentence, separated the seventh and eighth chapters. The thought is continuous. The freedom from condemnation is the direct result of the deliverance declared in the twenty-fifth verse, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord, *I am delivered.*" Paul tells men the price of this cherished life and its manifestation in the first part of the eighth chapter, then runs to

the top of the mast the banner of his triumph and shouts in assurance, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Just before this burst of artillery against the self-satisfied Jew, that concludes the second one of Paul's three great divisions of his argument in this book, our text appears. It is the key to the immediate victory through Christ, which climaxes His magnificent challenge to the unbelieving world.

The term "body" in Paul's argument is an inclusive one, that embraces both the material body and the indwelling mind in its selfish life. It is the carnal nature. It is the life, lived without the aid of the Spirit of God. It is man in his native state, unsaved, unsound, and helpless because self-centered and faithless.

2. The plan by which our "mortification," our living death, is brought to us is in the phrase, "If by the spirit," not the Holy Spirit, but your spirit. If *ye* put to death the deeds of the body ye shall live. The Holy Spirit is the sole power that makes possible this surrender to God. But it is not that

which the apostle is here endeavoring to declare. It is the reasonable working out of the forces of redemption. *It is the domination of the "body" by the mind.* It is the reasonable subjugation of man to the claims of God. He says, If ye through the mind are willing to rule the body, ye shall live. It is the new manner of life, now lived through reasonable choice, and by the aid of the Spirit of God. He will be with us because we welcome Him. He will help us because we open the way. He will deliver us because we lead Him to the dungeon's door. He will be a present Savior and live in us because we learn to apply the processes of his Spirit to our lives.

This life of holiness is the most natural and beautiful possibility of this groaning, growing, resplendent universe. Its salvation is of God, but its process is in man. So reasonable is it that the wonder is any can resist it. Nor do they so much in the intellect, as through the rebellion of the affections. They love lust and license, and therefore they will not believe. It is in the reasonable process of thought and self-mastery that Paul locates this new life of God. The world is a new world, not because it is new, but because man's rule over himself is new, and, therefore, his use of it is new. Paul

said to the Corinthians, "I strive to keep my body under;" or, more literally, I strike my body under the eye. I battle down the body with the mind, lest, after having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. Having in mind this reasonable plan of submission to God, we can enter the mine of our humiliation. Our lamp is a *safety*. We need not fear.

I. *Renunciation.*—Whoever enters the kingdom of God, or, having once been admitted, remains in possession of the secret of life, must *renounce the world*. This is death at once to all intrinsic sin. It requires no proof to you who are versed in the demands of grace, but lies alone in the province of illustration, to show that all flagrant sin must be abandoned. The antinomian is the one who curses the fairest truth of God with the foulest crime of hell. Drunkenness, lust, theft, villainy, murder, and every kindred crime must fly the field, or the Spirit of God will never abide. The pioneer can not camp, nor even unlimber his team, in the first wilderness of his surrender, until these wild beasts are driven from their lairs. Sometimes conscienceless men subsidize the kingdom of God for selfish gain, or lust, or power. Such men are deeper in sin than is the infidel world. There is, however, a far larger

number who have the form of faith but the motions of sin. They have carried over the old habit into the new life. I would rather take my chance for the kingdom of heaven as a drunkard, struggling helplessly against the habit of vice, than as a gossip-monger to barter the good name of others over a mess of pottage in my neighbor's house, or in "sour godliness" to find constant pleasure in captious criticism of the ministry and membership of the Church. Sometimes it happens that even under the protection of the call to preach men fall into like habits of thought. It is the greater shame when a minister, in the protection of his sacred calling, "borrows the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil." He is the one who, "in virtuous guise transacts fouler villainies than common sinners durst meddle with!" Away with the hypocrite to the scaffold! Life in God must be death to the world.

II. *Self-restraint.* A more needed province for present rehearsal is that of self-restraint, which *controls every lawful desire* within its permitted limits in grace. It is easier to battle against the pronounced sins of the common catalogue than to enter that realm which is known alone to the soul that surveys it, and which can not be analyzed by others except in their imperfect judgment of the visible

life. There is a province of self-restraint that is as essential to the thought of purity as is the abandonment of flagrant vice. The old Greek said, "Vice is the excess *of* virtue." He was right so far as he went, though incomplete in the analysis of sin. There are many desires, even passions, right in themselves, that gild in moderation, but blacken in the excess. One may sit down to the bountiful repast at the table of his friend where health waits upon delayed appetite. If when properly satisfied he does not obey the injunction of Solomon where he says, "Put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man of appetite," he will sin. What was good in moderation becomes evil in the excess. Self-restraint is essential to that permitted realm of pure desire which would touch the most sacred relationships of life. All desires are created to outrun capacity, and must, like the baying hound in the chase, or steed champing the bit, be held in by the authoritative voice of the master. As men are better known the conviction is forced upon belief that the majority of even our well-meaning workers in the Church of God never learn the import of this need of self-restraint. To the mountain, O Israel, in prayer—that the life of the example of self-sacrifice from Nazareth may be inwrought into the very

fiber of being, and be re-lived in the men of God to-day.

III. *Submission to the Higher Law.* Close to this province of self-restraint, yes, a further development of it, lies that *realm of restraint where the more subtle choices affecting character are made,* and where the most refined forms of rebellion may linger. It is restraint in the higher realm, obedience to the higher law. Inward emotion easily eludes analysis, even to the faithful themselves. Here are found the more sensitive conditions of mind and heart. Temptations vary with the surroundings, and with the changes of passing years. Those forms of attractive vice that allured you in youth have lost their keener pleasure. As the years have advanced the more reflective moods have asserted themselves. The buoyant disposition that led you in youth to rush into sin, has been chastened by time. But the sins of a meditative life are more difficult to grapple than the passions of youth. As men grow older they become more tenacious of opinion. They, if successful, will less and less brook restraint. Judgments against others tend to become more harsh, as self-satisfaction will become more arrogant. More men are vindictive after they are forty than ther are before. There is danger

with the unsuccessful of lapsing to the state of the abandoned, and with the prosperous of rising to the scorn of the proud. It is a task more than human to maintain the even balance of passion, and keep changing life ever true to its God. Here lies the needed conquest of faith.

There is a more subtle province still, where the soul devoted to God finds the very enthusiasm of faith becoming impatient with the ungodly, or perchance becoming self-willed in the inner ascetic life of the soul. The sun stands still to aid in this battle for "death." But we are tempted to ask, Will it ever go down till the judgment is here? We have never yet seen one who gave evidence of such grace.

I remember well the oft-repeated word of Wm. I. Fee, the pastor evangelist of the Cincinnati Conference, now of sainted memory. He was eighty years old when so often he spoke to me in phrase like this: "Last night I struggled with the tempter. I fought as if for my life. But I gained the victory." I said in wonder: "What temptations can you have? Why should you struggle? Life's work is assured and everything well." He sat in my room in the big arm-chair one day, and in answer to a question about his Christian experience, said: "I seldom use the word sanctification in regard to my

experience, for it is so misunderstood; but I claim to have the assurance of a complete consecration." Raising his slender hand above his head and holding it there, he added: "I trust I say it with all humility—I say it to the praise of God—I have not been angry in fifty-four years." And I believed it was true. Yet here was the testimony of one of whom more men could say good and fewer men speak evil than any man besides I remember to have known, who fought daily against some foe in thought. In the wide friendships made possible in the ministry, and even in the closer fraternity of the Conference itself, there seems daily proof that with most of us this living death in the soul's inner sanctuary has been supplanted with the dying life of a failing faith.

The search for holiness finds strange comment in the early days when the hermits and monks went apart from the world. They thought that to dwarf the body was to develop the soul; to kill the present was to create the future. We have long since learned that one can better battle himself into purity by entering the thick of the fray than by flying the field to seek God in a cell. But look at them, and tell me what they sought. They denied themselves all comfort of home, society, friends; lived on roots

or the humblest of common food; rose early, prayed late, did penance; lived on a pillar or in a cave; bound a chain around the waist cutting into the bone, or racked themselves with some form of daily torture; slept on beds of iron, or straw, or on the ground. They lived unhonored, and died unsung. Blind, foolish men! They should be pitied and not blamed. But tell me, what were they seeking? In all their blindness they sought the inner life of God. They "died" to the world as they understood "death." And to-day they rise in judgment against the Church of God. What have we done in our luxury to let God know and men believe that we have abandoned the world for the kingdom of heaven?

If we understand Paul's command, it is to that *living death,* that habit of life, that holiness of heart which secures the conquest of self for the kingdom of God. Let us together go to Nebo's summit and view the Promised Land. Then, in the name of Him who stood on the pinnacle of Jerusalem's temple, trod its wine-press, and trampled its Olivet, let us go up and possess it.

IV. *Unselfish Labor.* Our surrender of self for the good of others is absolutely essential to the life of holiness. In the mart where are purchased the

commodities for character, the standard of values is *each man's surrender for other's gain.* We would hold this to view in the light of two complemental facts: first, every great movement has meant the reformer's death; and second, such sacrifice brings its own reward.

It has seemed to require the incarnation of great thoughts in heroic manhood before the world has ever been deeply influenced by any great truth. No great thought has been wrought into the life of the world, but that a Calvary followed close after the baptism in a Jordan. The world's heroes are always anointed with blood. Look at the heroic band that first risked life on the truth of the teaching of Christ. Have you examined their history to see the truth of the claim? Almost every man died a violent death. John is excepted, but with him it took the prison of Patmos to open his eyes to the invisible city. James, the brother of John and cousin of Jesus, was beheaded at Jerusalem, as was also Matthias and Paul on the block in Rome. Five were crucified; Philip in Phrygia, Andrew and Jude in Edessa, Peter and Bartholomew at places unknown. Matthew was slain with a halberd in Ethiopia. James, the brother of the Lord, was stoned and his brains dashed out by a fuller's club

in Jerusalem. Mark was dragged to death in Alexandria. Luke was hanged on an olive-tree in Greece, and Thomas was thrust through with a spear in India. Following down the line from Polycarp to Boniface, to the Waldenses and Hussites, from Savonarola to the last dread facts of the inquisition, it is the torch of the martyrs that has lighted the march of the ages. The history of the past can be read by the light of the fagot. But the fagot *now* only smolders. Even the humanities of men show that the world is moving Godward.

Though this is true, the fact remains that the grace developed in persecution has been needed for the purest records of Christendom. I would call you, my friends, to the eternal law of sacrifice whose grosser forms, we trust, have passed forever into history, but whose more refined province in personal sacrifice for the good of others must be known to every child of God to-day. The missionary spirit in the believer, speaking its lessons of love, is the most eloquent appeal to a world in crime that has ever echoed through the darkness to lead man to God.

Then, too, the reward of such a life is a delight that makes self-denial happy and sends the soul singing in joy toward the gates of paradise. We

are not a band of bigots who surrender all pleasure. We are the richest owners in the universe of God. How tender the lament! How triumphant the experience! How reasonable the love of the converted and banished Jewish maiden, singing as she cast the glance of love back to her retreating home:

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be.
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, and hoped, and known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and heaven are still my own!"

It is the pleasure of living death, the passion of holiness for others' good, the re-lived life of the unselfish Son of God. May its refluent joy from the waves of missionary love for men make happy every child of faith!

V. *Submission to the providence of God* is the sacred, tender experience when all the world has fallen but the cross, and upon its reaches the soul stands to gaze into the face of its God. Life thus far with you and with me may have been almost cloudless. No hearse may have stood at the doorway. No trial may have wrecked nervous strength. No storms may have swept the ship from its moor-

ings. But, my friends, the day is coming when in the first chill of the winter, if the fire burn not in the heart, all life will seem a crime, and God responsible for it all. Happy is that one who before nightfall will light the lamp in his cabin home! When business is prosperous and health present, the home happy, and opportunity at hand, it requires no grace to be reconciled to life. Just to live then is joy. But when the trial comes it requires new grace. I remember most vividly one day when Thomas H. Pearne, one of our stalwarts, took me by the arm as we walked together and said, addressing me familiarly: "I want you to pray for me. It takes more grace to retire than to labor. I need your prayers." When the hour of your trial is at hand may there One be with you like unto the Son of man!

Bereavement, without faith, is deafening, blinding, destructive. It is terrible! And even to the Christian, the first tempest brings indescribable agony. The truth is, the first gash that death ever cuts in the turf of your family burying-ground will seem to open a grave wide enough to bury your hope forever. But the sweet refuge of sorrow is in the bosom of God. It is upon earth's agony that the fragrance of heaven is distilled. It has been well

said that "A woman's face is never so beautiful as just after she has passed through a great sorrow."

There lived last year, my neighbor, a minister of the Presbyterian Church. He was my friend. I loved him. His child played with mine, and good will daily was carried by word of mouth, or over the 'phone. Last October he took sick, and gradually, yes, quickly, went down. He struggled, he prayed, he pleaded, he hoped. One day he said: "I want to talk a long talk with you about what God will do in answer to prayer." But sometimes, as Chrysostom puts it, our prayers are not answered in kind, but *kindness*. He grew worse. They went to the far West, but all in vain. One day he said to his brave, noble wife, as he laid his head on her shoulder: "O, mother! let's just cry all we want to, then let me lie down and die, for that will be the end of it all anyway." Then rallying in faith, he went to his death like a conqueror to his throne. In the bloom of immortal hope he died. No! He went to his triumph.

As a minister I am often called to the cemetery. It is always well kept. We could ask no more. But it always rains there. You can shave the lawn and polish the shaft. There is nothing that makes it beautiful, even bearable, but faith! Through faith, however, every shaft is a prism, every grave a

doorway, every mound a mount of transfiguration. I shall never forget the rebuke when a pastor in Hillsboro. I said to one living within the limits of the cemetery ground, "I should think this would be a gruesome place to live." She replied, "Why, no; just think of what a place to live if the resurrection morning was here!"

Some day you will see again the cherished of earth. The friends of the years, the family of your love, your father long gone, your mother upon whose cheek you would give the world if only you could once more press your lips, and whisper to her your love. The triumph is coming. Blind eyes are now being opened. Deaf ears are now hearing. The discordant voices of life are even now blending into harmony. The divergent rays are beginning to unite. One day it will be the white light of heaven. His kingdom has begun in your hearts, and of it there shall be no end. It is life—life—*eternal life!* Be willing, then, to press out your own life's blood into the cup and drain it to its dregs. Immortal life is in its pledge!

The law unveiled in the word of our text bears with its lesson of sorrow also the life of our God. It seems to us, as we glance back to it, like Mount Shasta in its glory. There Shasta stands the key,

they tell us, to the volcanic line of the West. Eight hundred years ago it last "blew its head off." Yet each year, almost month, it rumbles and heaves and groans and all but turns into eruption. Fourteen hundred feet down from the crest there is a mouth three-fourths of a mile wide. For twenty-four hundred feet they have let down the lead, but no plumb line has touched the bottom. Last year for hours, as we gradually ascended its base, it towered above us, no matter which way we went. We might turn this way or that way, but Mount Shasta still stood like a guardian peak clad in white. Fourteen thousand three hundred and eighty feet it lifted its crest into the air. The sun shone round us in the warmth of June. The fields waved and fruits were ripening. But, snow clad for a mile straight down from its summit, it stood majestic and beautiful, glistening in the sunlight or silvered in the moonlight—nature's meeting ground for the inner fire and upper air. Our text is a Mount Shasta. The fires of sacrifice roll, and heave, and gather. Man must die to selfish life. But on its slope the sun shines. White in the pure light of the life of God it is most beautiful. Step up on its slopes! Climb to its crest! You feel yourself going Godward. See! See! From its summit the kingdom of heaven! May God help you to enter in!

V.

MEMORY'S PLACE IN DESTINY.

"My sin is ever before me."—Psa. li, 3.

The life of David the Shepherd King is crude and unchaste, in the light of the teachings of Christ. But in contrast with the contemporary kings of that early day, it is unsullied and beautiful. In 2 Samuel we find the story of his dealings with Uriah, which violate every sensitive feeling. Were one of our leaders to-day guilty of like crime, he would be banished from the favor of the good. If the offender were numbered a leader in the Church of God, none would now restrain the strength of the law. It is to the honor of the Old Testament law that the immoral liberty allowed to other kings was forbidden the leader in Israel.

It was while a war was in progress against the Ammonites, that David, at dusk, walked upon the roof of his palace. He may have been meditating upon the plans of the campaign. Or possibly, in the seclusion of the early evening, he was endeavor-

ing to forget care in brief exercise. As he walked back and forth he espied one in a neighboring apartment, who appeared to him to be most beautiful. In the unguarded moment he yielded to the impulse of sin. In answer to his inquiry, the reply was soon brought by his servant that it was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, whom he saw. Taking advantage of Uriah's absence upon the field of battle, David sinned in fact as well as in thought. Then, in order the better to protect himself, he recalled Uriah to Jerusalem. The character of Uriah flashes in unselfish beauty, in his refusal to return to his home, through loyalty to his isolated companions on the field. Some new plan must be devised. David quickly made Uriah himself the bearer of a sealed letter, instructing Joab to place him in the front of the battle. This was done, as the king directed, even to the rash charge by picked men against the very wall of the enemy's city. In the attack Uriah was killed by one of the marksmen on the wall. The plan had succeeded—Uriah was dead. Guilty of the double crime of unchastity and plotted murder, David now thinks, unpunished, to rejoice in the result of his success. But the messenger of judgment soon tarried at the gate. The prophet of vengeance was

upon him. There stood before him one who, under the guise of a case for judgment, exposed the king's own crime to his astonished gaze. It was Nathan. He said, "there were two men in one city, the one rich, the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and his children. It did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him." At the simple statement of the supposed case for judgment, David execrated the foul perpetrator and said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." Then Nathan, looking the king full in the face, and sending the keen thrust of the blade of judgment through his heart, said, "Thou art the man." He alluded to the sin against Uriah, and pronounced the verdict of the Almighty against David, and against such crime to the end of time. This was the occasion of conviction for sin in David's thought.

He saw not this sin alone, but the many besides, in which he had justly incurred the wrath of God. The one sin was but the first bird of the flock, and was the signal for many to follow. As he reviewed his sins, his thoughts sank more heavily, like the fog in the valleys as it went down to the very depths. He saw his sinful state, and cried for forgiveness. While in the throes of repentant sorrow, he wrote the beautiful fifty-first Psalm, in the third verse of which our text is found—"My sin is ever before me." He prayed, "Wash me thoroughly;" that is, again and again. He was harassed by the consciousness of crime. He could not away with it. It flung its hideous form before him. Uriah's face was before his face. Two eyes stared into his eyes. The finger of judgment pointed directly at him. He was tortured in mind. He remembered his sin. He cried out, "It is ever before me," showing the deathless quality of memory. This brings us into the presence of the thought in our text, which we desire to interpret and apply, *i. e., the part that memory plays in destiny.*

Theology, on the human side, is an attempt to put into definition the contending forces for character building, and, on the divine side, to formulate the movements of God's Spirit, superintending the

conflict. The noblest province for the activity of the forces of the kingdom of God is the mind of man. So true is this, that a right mental philosophy is an essential for a clear analysis of the vital questions of Christian experience. The right balance of our faculties, in reference to moral ends, is the prime aim of religion. When secured, contentment follows; when violated, conscience is tormented. The conscious and purposed moods of thought that culminate in conduct are life or death, heaven or hell. Sometimes the mind seems a tournament hell.

Let us briefly note the *relative worth of memory among the faculties.* Sometimes the mind seems a tournament ground, where the knights-errant strive. The will is the knight; the memory his armor, plume, and steed; imagination his expectant cavalcade of backers; the judgment the presiding queen, to decide the fate of contesting steel. Sometimes the mind appears as a court-room, with destiny itself on trial. The judgment presides on the bench; the imagination makes the plea; the will, as the court-crier, summons the evidence; while the evidence itself, upon which the decision rests, is the memory. Most men rely upon memory for both their facts and the mode of their statement; while only a few do

original thinking. With the majority, memory is the greatest of all the faculties; and with every one it is important. In the immortal life of mind, memory must forever act its part. It is eternal, and will enter into destiny, whether that be in good or evil.

We would briefly note the *laws that govern memory.* Clear *perception* will make memory easy, and, if there be the right habit of recollection, will make it almost unerring. The *will* has much to do with the precision of memory, for the executive ability in man seems to command every separate faculty. A thought, distinct and separate from all other ideas, will be more easily retained. The wheel whirling in the midnight, revealed by the flash of the lightning, seems standing still, and is photographed upon the mind. The *emotion,* awakened by self-interest, will arouse the whole mind to intense activity. The face, attitude, and words of an accuser or messenger of sad tidings will long remain vivid. The swift rush of fate, with a drowning man, will send life's panorama a thousand leagues in the review in the click of a second. The mountain peaks of memory all seem to join the swift parade, and flash by with the speed of the lightning. Life is reviewed. The natural *like* or *dislike* will act a most important part in our review of the

mind's treasures. A philosopher forgets mathematical formula, a mathematician abstract truths, and a jester sober facts, though possessed of endless varieties of fun. Each recalls the facts according to his likes, and forgets according to his dislikes. Thomson most beautifully expresses the idea in the words, "Prevailing disposition paints the panorama of remembered thought." But we seek only to analyze memory for its moral quality, and believe there is a law as deep as nature and as enduring as eternity, that will find its place in immortal destiny.

Character gauges memory. Our love, our hate, settled into disposition, will prove as immovable as the hills, as unchanging as the fixed fiber of immortal mind.

Come with me in a brief retracing of the years. Go back to the home of your childhood, and tell me what you see. It was possibly a humble farm home among the hills, but happiness reigned. Sometimes the task seemed hard, when cutting the wood, or calling the kine, or belated at school you stood on the floor. There were your brothers and sisters, the lads and lassies from the neighboring farms; and one of them now walks by your side. How happy the shout! How free the air! How blessed

the memory! There was the log sheep-house, the stable, the windlass, the lonesome mourning of the hoot-owl in the dusk. How vivid it all is! Then came the long winter evenings. Your father sat in the old arm chair. Adjusting his glasses, or lengthening his arms, he read aloud. You listened, and wondered—and nodded. Your mother sat in the straight-back rocker, listening, knitting, and thinking of you. Then you knelt at her knee, said your evening prayer, and kissed her good-night. It is as vivid as though it were yesterday. You can almost feel the touch of her hand. The sweet accent of her love lingers in memory, as fresh as the breath of the morning. But the years have changed; the old home is gone. Your father was taken from you in the pride of his strength. Your angel mother quietly fell asleep one sweet, sad day. She is not with you now. Long years have passed since then, but memory is vivid. Tell me in truth, as you think of them both, is there aught but good that seems ever to have been theirs? No! Memory gives back our loved ones in their fairest forms. All evil is forgotten. Only the good is remembered. It is the law of love giving cast to life.

When enmity prevails, the reverse is equally true. An enemy possesses no virtues. His graces

lack; his faults overlap. When friendship reigned he was among the sons of the fair. But now, memory overcast with revenge, his earlier love is but the later felony. It is the law of disposition affecting the past either in good or evil. It is memory selecting after its kind.

Let us follow the thought still further, *for in its depths is mirrored the eternal.* The law of disposition in the wide sweep of its influence brings the whole world of activity under its sway. Love and hate, once settled in character, will cause memory to rehearse the past according to its cherished moral moods. Those who are good will delight to rehearse the things that are good. The wicked will recall the memories that are wicked. We carry with us that passion of soul which, allowed to control the present moment, will gather from the past like worlds with itself, and make man seven-fold the child of heaven or of hell. There are some things that almost every man would give worlds if he could only forget. There are some memories that are like the riches of the kingdom of heaven. Which of the two worlds we will welcome around us will depend upon the moral nature affecting the memory.

Conscience, the handmaid of destiny, is waited upon by memory. Offended, it flies to history for

the ground of its terror. Approved, it seeks the past to brighten its future. Even the slight wrongs we have done to others by mistake do now and then send the throbbing angel of regret coursing in pain through every vein. But unforgiven sin forever lingers in the mind of the evil doer, lit up by the lurid light of a coming storm. The memory of crime circles the confines of a field of terror, whose ever nearing center is the wrath of an offended God. Men rest uneasily when possessed with the prophecy of coming doom. It renames the guilty soul "Macbeth," and sends swift judgment on the heels of crime. The one who carries with him the secret knowledge of guilt, is tortured by day and haunted by night. He understands too well what Clarence meant in King Richard III. He sees his victim

> ". . . Wandering by,
> A shadow like an angel, with bright hair
> Dabbled in blood. And he squeaked out loud:
> 'Clarence is come, false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,
> That stabbed me in the field of Tewksbury.
> Seize on him, Furies! take him to your torments!'"

Not only a Charles IX, at twenty-four, when dying cried out, as he recalled the massacre of St. Bartholomew, "How many murders! what rivers of blood!" not only a bloodthirsty Nero hears groans from the grave of his murdered mother, but all his-

tory seems the hideous whispering gallery of offended justice, as men have paid the inner penalty of their crimes. It is what Joseph Cook calls "the innermost laughter of the soul at itself, . . . which it rarely hears more than once without hearing it forever." Out of his vivid discussion of conscience we take the last lament of one of America's bright minds, John Randolph. He fought a duel with Henry Clay. He walks into the senate chamber staggering in his last illness. Mr. Clay is rising to speak. The two men have not addressed each other for months. "Lift me up," says Randolph, loud enough for Clay to hear him. "I must listen to that voice once more." He was lifted up. Clay finished his speech, and the men shook hands and parted almost friends. Randolph was taken to Philadelphia, and his biographer affirms that on his death-bed he asked his physician to show him the word remorse in the dictionary. "There is no dictionary in the room," says the physician. "Very well; here is a card. The name of John Randolph is on one side of it. Write on the other the word which best symbolizes his soul. Write remorse in large letters; underscore the word." After that was done, Randolph lifted up the card before his eyes, and repeated in a loud voice, three times, "Remorse,

remorse, remorse!" "What shall we do with the card?" says the physician. "Put it in your pocket, and when I am dead look at it. . . . I hope I have looked to Almighty God as a Savior and obtained some relief; but when I am dead look at the word which utters the inmost of my soul, and you will understand of what human nature is capable."

I remember the oppression that settled upon us, when, on my first circuit in one of the eight neighborhoods in which I was appointed to preach, the following incident occurred. It was during a protracted meeting. One night a man about thirty-five years of age strayed into the service, and taking his seat, the second from the rear, listened attentively. Under the impression of the leading of the Spirit, I spoke to him. In answer to the question, touching his attitude toward religion, he replied in most indifferent fashion, "I do n't think much about it." A brief conversation followed, in which he was frank but unyielding. I left him with this word: "My friend, this may be your opportunity." So far as we could learn that was his last warning. In three weeks the hearse stood at the door. In the conscious hours before death his agony of mind was most terrible. We forbear a description of the scene, but never did we pass the house afterward

but the swaying tree in the corner of the lot seemed to echo that shrill, piercing cry, "O, I'm lost!" Memory was forming its awful compact with conscience. We are well aware that last experiences are sometimes the most unreliable of testimonies, nor do we construct an argument upon them. What we seek to illustrate is the inevitable swing of destiny, that hurries the soul through conscious crime to a most terrible inward fate.

Let me tell you the brief story of one whom I met only four months since. It was one stormy night, early in January of this year, when called to preach at one of the union meetings of Dayton, in a church of another denomination than our own. Following the appeal of the night, during which the thought now in review was set forth, a remarkable scene presented itself. All but a few of us had left the church. A man, about sixty years of age, was earnestly engaged in conversation with a member of the Presbyterian Church. Stepping down toward them they both faced me as I approached. Divining the import of the conversation, I said, "My friend, give yourself to God!" With a quick movement of the hand and a single word in reply, he said, "No!" Again I urged with more emphasis, "Give yourself to God to-night!" Again

he replied in the same word. The third appeal brought the response which I will never forget. He raised his hands even with his head, and trembling from head to foot said: "Sir, you do n't know me. The time was when I could. But it is too late now." Dropping one hand to his side, and raising the other above his head, while his eyes stared as though into eternity, he added, "I once lived in happiness. But O! the drink! My wife has rejected me. My children have disowned me. I have the hell of remorse in my soul now!" His hand dropped to his side, and turning slowly he passed out into the darkness. I saw him step ankle deep into the slush of the street, and his retreating form disappear in the shadow of the street light on the corner across the way. It was the picture of a soul going out into the night. Conscience was entering suit to close the mortgage on memory, and make it its possession forever. How true and how terrible the words of Byron:

"The mind that broods o'er guilty woes
Is like the scorpion girt by fire:
In circle narrowing as it glows,
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly scorched by thousand throes,
And inly maddening in her ire,
One and sole relief she knows,—
The sting she nourished for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,

Gives but one pang and cures all pain,
She darts into her desperate brain.
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven;
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death."

When Herod heard that a prophet had arisen, he said, "It is John the Baptist risen from the dead." It was memory at work bringing the facts of his crime to the aid of offended conscience. One of the most terrible thrusts of the blade in the teaching of the New Testament is where Christ taught through the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. In answer to the cry, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame," Abraham replied "Son, remember."

We are not among those who construe the punishment of sin in the literal figure of the Scripture. Yet a figure is simply the analogy in a concrete form of a fact which can not be taught in the construction of human language in an abstract way. Nor can the figure ever equal the fact. Who is there with temerity enough that he would dare to deny the province of conscience in the government of God! *It is the inner world ablaze.* There is a dread

to the lost, hungry, lone traveler in the mountains, when night is coming on, that words can never describe. The crackling of the wind in the pine seems the tread of a wild beast. Every reflection is a glistening eye, the gulch a grave, the peak its monument. He thinks of home; hears infant voices calling him; wishes he was there, if only to die; and in indescribable loneliness abandons himself to his fate. So is it in the awful journey of an abandoned soul entering into its judgment. Every reflective moment becomes a glinting blade, and every new hope a bleeding victim. The fathomless depths of inward torture present a hideous spectacle, more shocking as nature is more sensitive, more undying as mercy was more fervent.

Mind is immortal, therefore memory must be. The water at Niagara is unchanged in its leap. So is memory in the final wreck of death. The scaffolding of the body gives way, but the building, the mind, stands forever. If in this life the reflective faculty is the frequent angel of God in the rewards of men, who shall say that an eternal memory will not prove the perpetual messenger of the Almighty? We remember in our college life the figure of Haven in his philosophy, where he described the fitful sound of the breaking waves, heard only at uneven intervals by one in the confusion

around. But at midnight, when men were asleep and the world had grown quiet, every wave that leaped out of the deep and broke itself on the shore was distinct. So will it be with conscience in the future. In the stillness of eternity not a beating wave will be lost. Eternity is long; and the awful menace of crime is that the guilty soul must live with itself forever.

Yet the enforced existence of the soul with itself is as blessed in reward as it is terrible in remorse. The one who now walks in conscious love toward God and man, is safe from fear in any world where God will ever put him. Life's struggles may be severe, its battles intense. Care may cut deep the furrows, and disappointment sink deep the wells. If the soul will but live with God, it will take two worlds to tell of its joy. How hallowed the memory of life's better moods, even here! How rich such a memory in which to robe the immortal years! The peace that glows and flashes, and brightens with the flight of time, will prove as enduring as the nature of God. Happy the one who only through love recalls life in its settled delights, and teaches destiny to wait upon blessed memory. Evil forgotten! Good recalled! Time failing! Eternity brightening! Heaven assured! And the soul safe forever!

VI.

THE UNVEILED VISION.

"But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away."—2 Cor. iii, 16.

Sometimes a text is a beast of burden, and on its back we bind many unrelated ideas, suggested by analogy, which need to be carried to the tents of our hearers. Sometimes it is a cistern, and we draw out of it just what we have been able, by our theological plumbing, to turn into it. Sometimes it is a well, whose waters, though more difficult to draw, are ever springing up from within to give to the thirsty the blessing of life. We trust the verse chosen to-day may be as the last, whose waters may refresh some soul, wearied in life's blistering heat. Yes, we would it might prove even more, and become to us the place, like Jacob's well to the woman of Samaria, where, in quiet seclusion, the Son of God may talk with us.

Let us take a brief general survey of the context before looking directly into the verse of the text itself.

The second Corinthian letter was probably the third formal communication Paul had sent to Corinth, and finds its warrant in the blighted faith of those who had once been clear in experience and keen in the defense of the Gospel.

Paul spent much time in Corinth and Ephesus, the two gateways between Europe and Asia, for he always preferred to face the heathen life at the crossing of the currents. After eighteen months of preaching and hardship in Corinth, during which time he founded the Corinthian Church, he left for Jerusalem to fulfill a vow; not, however, until the peace of the Society seemed assured in the protection of the law under Gallio, against the fomenting Jews. Returning to the Ephesian capital he spent three years of a most strenuous ministry, fighting down the beasts of Ephesus. Being solicitous of the Corinthian cause, he made a brief visit to Corinth, finding that sad havoc had been wrought through many defections, caused by the lapsing of some into their formal legalism and lustful habits. He spoke of his visit afterward as made "in heaviness." Upon his return to Ephesus he wrote his first brief Epistle, now only known to us as the lost letter to Corinth. This was, however, probably only one of many letters written during his ministry, to this and

other Churches, unknown to us now. In his Colossian letter (iv, 16), he alludes to an Epistle to be given to the Colossians by Laodicea, when their own letter should be read at Laodicea. There were doubtless many personal as well as general letters that he wrote. It would be unnatural to think that the one to Philemon was the only one he had sent, because none other is recorded; just as the catalogue of perils in 2 Cor. xi, 24-26, being only in part accounted for in the journeys known to us would suggest others about which nothing is said.

The Corinthian company had regularly met in some house, as that of Aquila or Gaius. They had presented the marked and contradictory spectacle of fervent Gentile conversion and lapsing Jewish defection. So pronounced was the disorder that the knowledge of it seems to have even been a factor in Paul's feeling when he spoke of "the care of all the Churches." It was in his third residential year in Ephesus, probably in the early spring of the year 57, that Paul received the fuller word about the Corinthian Church. The occasion seems to have been the arrival at Ephesus from Corinth of a woman named Chloe, with her family. Through her account, Paul learned of the disaffection against

him, and the prevalent sin among the people. No excuse can be offered for the immorality prevalent in the Church, yet their unchastity became the occasion of Paul writing his sacred code of purity in his Corinthian letters, and their doubt of the resurrection created the need for the magnificent argument in the fifteen chapter of his first letter, to establish the faith of the ages. Following his extended and most remarkable letter, known as 1 Corinthians, he dispatched Titus to learn the effect it had upon them. Leaving Ephesus immediately after the great commotion against him, and failing to meet Titus in Troas, he passed on into Macedonia. There he received from him the full truth concerning the internal condition of the Church, and, as he expressed it himself, "was greatly comforted by the coming of Titus." The result of this first letter to Corinth had been to pacify and unify the part of the Church favorable to him, but to intensify the opposition of the faction against him. He expressed his comfort, however, in that so many had received his word favorably, and proceeded to defend both his personal character and his apostolic authority among them. *This is the intent of the second Corinthian letter.*

His self-defense in the third chapter presents a

cogent and beautiful argument, in which he defends his claim by contrasting the superiority of the Gospel which he brought them, with the law under which they had formerly lived. In view, therefore, of this he declares his apostolic authority, and tenderly asserts his rightful claim upon their loyal love. How tender and beautiful the affectionate assurance, "Ye are our Epistle," as though Paul had written the assurance of his own ministry in their "hearts of flesh," and out of such a book of testimony the whole world could read it. Furthermore he declares that he and his fellow ministers were "able," meaning both successful and duly commissioned of God.

The sixth verse, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," is the text of a brief and beautiful argument, whose three interpreting ideas are found in the succeeding verses. In establishing the greater glory of the new dispensation, he declares in the seventh and eighth verses, the necessary death, under the law, of every man, consequent upon the inability of any perfectly to keep it. In contrast with this is the dispensation of the Spirit, bringing possible life to all the world. In the ninth and tenth verses the further interpretation of that death is analyzed, declaring that condemnation attaches to

the infraction of the law, and must culminate in the death just stated. In opposition to this is the righteousness, possible through faith, to every believer in Christ. No man can keep the perfect law, for the law is perfect and man limited and imperfect. If man could, by his unaided nature, keep the law, then life would have been by the law. Paul says in Galatians iii, 21, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." On the other hand, faith is possible to every man, and this ability being now a native gift to a redeemed race, results in possible righteousness to every one. In the eleventh verse the glory of the old dispensation, whose ceremonial fulfillment was to be found in time, was but transient; while the glory of the new Revelation in Christ was to last forever. The conclusion is clinched, and the statement of the sixth verse reaffirmed, in the seventeenth, in the word, "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"—liberty from death into life, liberty from condemnation into righteousness, liberty from the limits of time into eternal possibilities.

We are thus brought face to face with our text. The sixteenth verse, "But whensoever it shall turn

to the Lord, the veil is taken away," is a diamond set in the gold of Paul's argument, which seems to us as the betrothal ring of Christ to His Church. Hold it in the light of inspiration, and it flashes the pledge of another world into the depths of this one. The prayer to-day accompanies this word, that it may give its light to some soul in darkness, and make possible the clearer knowledge of a present Redeemer.

I. We would seek, first, the interpretation of the darkened vision of our text, which is the warrant for the other related truths of the text.

No sooner had the brilliant and beautiful argument, whose thoughts follow in quick succession, like a procession of meteors, been stated in the three points of contrast already noted, than a most beautiful interpretation appears, beginning with the twelfth verse. It concerns the reception by the Jew of the law at Sinai. Having constructed the argument like the scaffolding of a high tower, he stands upon it and gazes over the uneven centuries until Sinai is on a line with his vision. He sees Moses descending from the mountain to offer to an unbelieving world the Word of the Eternal. He declares that when Moses had proclaimed the law of God to the Israelites, their minds were blinded to

the true intent of the very law which they were at that time receiving.

After Moses talked with God, his face was radiant with the light of the divine presence. The word had reached his inner thought. God was with him; yes, in him. How could he do otherwise than show it? The face is the flashlight in the top of the tower, and should show to the world the glory within. If God made the face of Moses to shine; if He showed His glory in the Shekinah, upon an altar of gold, to prove to the Jew His continued presence, will not the face, the heart's better altar, now glow with light when God is with us? The Christian should be happy, even radiant of countenance. If he has learned the contentment of godliness his very face will speak of that inner rest. It is said that when the picture of the one in prayer upon the dome of the Capitol was painted, the face was a failure until the artist had studied the faces of those who believed in Christ. He saw a radiance of feature, not born of earth, chastening the expression of the face. With this new proof of the effect of faith, he touched the countenance of the one in prayer with his brush, until the sunlight of another world seems reflected in it. Methodism has lived, and loved, and shouted its way for a century

past, in the joy of conscious salvation. Nor will the glory of a conscious experience through faith in Christ, ever be allowed to fail among us.

When Moses gave to the people the law he had received from God, they did not perceive its perfect meaning. Prejudice, passion, jealousy, stupid sensuality, idolatry, ignorance became a veil to blind their vision. As a sign, therefore, of their blindness, Moses put a veil upon his face, which he removed, as we are told in Exodus (xxxiv), when he went into the presence of the Lord. The veil may have had a double significance, both to symbolize their blindness, and to conceal from them the fading light from the face of Moses. Moses himself could not forever live in such an ecstasy of glory. Had they been able to see the light gradually fade away, a contempt of him and of the law he had given, might at once have been awakened. Paul first rehearses the historical fact just stated. Then he interprets, and further applies the figure, by saying that the veil which Moses put upon his face was afterward taken from his face, and laid over the vision of the Jewish people. In the fourteenth and fifteenth verses he declares that "until this day remaineth the same veil, untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is

done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart."

The Old Testament is prophetic of the New. Its ceremonies are meaningless, crude, and even cruel in themselves, yet in the light of the coming dispensation they appear beautiful. Moses himself declared that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." By this he prophesied the Messiah. David said, "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore, God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Elsewhere he saw, in prophetic vision, the throne of Infinite Power, and said, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." It was David's vision of the coming Messiah. Jeremiah prophesied the "Comfort" to come. Daniel saw Him under a different figure, and said, Not a tower, not a throne; but I see Him as a "stone cut out of the mountain without hands, that became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Zechariah saw the coming Glory of Israel in still different form, and said, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man, whose name is THE BRANCH; and He

shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne." All Israel had been watching through the centuries for the coming of the Messiah. And just before Revelation went into an eclipse, Malachi shaded his eyes to peer into the future, and declared the coming dawn in the figure, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." They had looked forward to Christ's coming, but failed to recognize Him when He appeared. Their sin was that of ceremonial blindness. The gorgeous temple was to them God's final building, instead of being symbolic of that far grander spiritual frame, the body of believers. They seemed blinded to the Redeemer's intercession, typified in the priestly ministration. They trusted the priest rather than the One he figured. The offering of a beast was itself efficacious, instead of being simply prophetic of Calvary's coming sacrifice.

The form of faith had become to them the faith itself. How often the same is true to-day. Not only the criminal folly of a Roman hierarchy is perpetuated, but Protestantism may easily be guilty of like fault. The seeming faith in the efficacy of Church rights, is seen with many among us. It re-

quires constant watching against formalism. The great Presbyterian Church is at this very time debating the advisability of more extended form in its service, for those who desire it. Our own Church is making more elaborate its ceremonies with every succeeding decade. Nor do we lament this. Nothing in worship is so beautiful besides as religious ceremony made radiant with the Spirit of God. A mathematical sanctity, however, may easily be substituted for a true faith, which neither finds echo in the soul of the worshiper, nor response in heavenly blessing. Too much formality may turn us from God, like the earth from the sun, until we walk in our own shadow. Religion without form soon ceases to be religion. We must have some visible ceremony to symbolize the invisible and spiritual. Yet it is only the currency of exchange, not the real gold of the kingdom. It is the needed wire for the current, not the electricity itself. What we want in our Churches to-day is the glow, and fervor, and purity, and power that will make men see God as if face to face. Our gorgeous churches, massive in architecture and attractive in their frescoed beauty, are but doomed monuments of a once intelligent faith, unless graced by the spiritual life of the worshipers. It is not the light, filtered

through stained windows, that will hallow our service, but the better brightness of the face of God glowing in our hearts in answer to faith. We would that every form, with every worshiper in this presence, might be broken rather than the face of God be hid.

The Jew was to see that in the new law in Christ, the law of the old must culminate, and its ceremonies pass away. Their ideals were the exact opposite of the evil immediately before them. They looked for relief from political and social oppression. They expected a temporal Lord, whose throne would be in the glory of conquest, and would rest upon the fragments of kingdoms. Instead, however, of the dignity of a chariot in a triumphal march, it was the cradle in the scooped stone feeding trough in a Bethlehem stable. Instead of the shouts of men, echoing through the world, it was the voice of angels, whose song, a symphony of peace, was heard only by those whose ears were divinely attuned to its music. The Jew studied the word of the old law, with its prescribed ceremonies, but could not see that the Messiah could ever come in the humble form of a peasant of Nazareth. There was no beauty, as men define beauty, that would lead them to desire Him. He was a man of sorrows, and ac-

quainted with grief. Men hid their faces from Him—and they do so still. They prefer the glittering show of a priestly robe; seek the grace and faultless manner of a Chesterfield for their pulpit, forgetful of nobler qualities; prate of the eloquence of dazzling metaphors, through some prismatic intellect, from the lamp of reason; and discount the more simple word of honest appeal that would prove to be to them the sunlight, if they did but know it. They borrow the syren-song of an unconverted hireling, in place of the less finished but more glorious melody of the kingdom; quiet conscience in the pomp of service, and rest awhile for the new onslaught of the business week. We love a beautiful ceremony. We rejoice in increasing ministerial culture. We love the art of man, if chastened by the love of God. But above all we pray, for the deeper love, that will make beautiful our forms through perfect faith, and cause the radiance of an eternal world to cast its halo of love over the hearts of men.

II. Not only the fact of clear vision is promised in the text, but the conditions are named for its reception. The relation of intellect and affection is cogently stated in the phrase, "Whenever the heart shall turn." They were to see the truth, not through

a keen intellect, but through a pure heart. This is a day of "criticism," of investigation, of the examination of the foundations. Men are asking a sound reason for every law of faith; and in this we rejoice. Without doubt many things have been placed in creeds that God never sanctioned. Men have been asked to measure themselves by conventional standards, and to bear "burdens grievous to be borne." What a splendid chance, in this race of life, God has given us, that even the mistakes of a bigot can be atoned for by the goodness of his purpose! The thought, however, which we here seek is the influence of the heart in the understanding of truth. Some study the Bible from the standpoint of reason, to the exclusion of faith. They declare that reason is the final arbiter of Revelation. We are not unmindful of reason's place in the unfolding of God's thought. He spoke not only *to* men, but *through* them. A human mind was the channel of the divine thought, therefore the truth was cast in the mold of limited intellect. It is most natural, therefore, that there should be a place for "Criticism." We believe that the "Higher Critic," often assuming, and as often maligned, is doing a great work for the purer faith and simpler life of Christendom. If we have been guilty of bibliolatry,

we should be willing to repent. The truth can never require an error to preserve its benefit to the race. Yet there is equal need to remember the rightful place of love in the interpretation of truth. Men come to the study of the Bible with a cold logical intellect, and in their perplexity they shake their heads as they turn away, and well they might shake them. It is not through the head, but through the heart, that men are to see the truth. We can not go either through the world nor into the kingdom of God "head first." We must go "heart first." The heart is the pioneer, though the head may be the settler. There are God-sent critics, and there are theological speculators, whose icy fingers, clasping the emotional doctrines of the Christian teaching, both chill and strangle till lifeless. A single interview with such a trusted adviser has sent many a sensitive young man away with a chill for life. Such a minister is a director of thought, like the poor street-car driver in Columbus, a few years since, who froze to death while in his seat, and the car freighted with human life rolled on, driven by a corpse. We would the prayer of Bishop George might ring out over the Church, and receive response from every altar: "O Thou who lightest the

lamps of glory, save the Methodist Church from freezing out!"

The mind endeavoring to enter the citadel of truth, without love as a guide, will be as a wandering waif in a great city. It can pass by the edifice and catch a glimpse of the external magnitude. It can desire to enter. But driven from corner to cross street, an outcast, it is never so much as permitted to enter the temple whose inner altar it had hoped to see. Alas! for any Church when its Biblical critics will warm themselves, like Jehoiachim in his winter palace before the pan of coals, and, displeased, cut with the penknife the inspired Word, when not according to their preconceived thought of what God should do. In Timothy, Paul lodges the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. Christ says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Though truth unfolds in a system, it by no means follows that he who, devoid of faith, exerts himself with keenest intellect will see deepest into spiritual truth. As the receptive attitude of one receiving a gift is the ground of the bestowal, but not the necessity of its being given, just so is study the condition of knowledge, but not the necessity of spiritual perception. Our search must be mixed with faith. It is "he that

wills to do God's will, that shall know of the teaching." The humble believer, housed by a cabin, untaught in the schools, ignored among men, yet contented in God, may see deeper into the spiritual truth of the Scripture than the arrogant intellect, however skilled, that, through reason alone, would tunnel its way into the bosom of the Almighty. Approached with faith, the questions that seem "as dark as the tents of Kedar," become as "beautiful as the curtains of Solomon." The heart must be like the lamp which the sculptor wore on his study cap. He placed it there that no shadow might fall on his work. So the mind, if the heart shed its light in the angle of vision, will be able to round the form and carve the features of perfect character into the likeness of God.

III. The "whensoever it turns" of the text separates the act of turning from all conditions, except the action of the one who turns. It announces a definite act, separate from all others; not continuous, but complete in itself. The second part, "the veil is taken away," is the statement of a present completed action, depending upon the clause preceding for its special time and meaning. Thus the verse declares that whensoever the heart turns the veil is taken away. That is, in the very act of

faith the veil is removed—no tarrying, no delaying, no developing, no exchanging the veil for a gauze, no growing into it, but instantly, in the flash of the eye, the sight pierces the veil and beholds the light of God. Could anything more beautifully teach us conversion than this? How pointedly it shows that forgiveness of sin is not a process of growth, not an evolution, but an instantaneous divine act, resulting in the illumination of the soul.

IV. All Revelation finds its culmination in character. The Jew, with the heart turning to God, was able to see the truth of God as revealed in Christ. It is suggestive of our relation to all truth.

Isaiah warns the world, in the piercing cry, "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight!" He does not once suggest an apology for ignorance. There is a current legend, of which Joseph Cook has spoken, of an old hermit, who lived in a cabin on an island in the Androscoggin River in Maine, where the island reaches down to the Lewiston Falls. The Indians had plotted his death. Under the cover of midnight, in the dark of the moon, twelve savages started in

their canoes, intent upon the hermit's death. He was accustomed to place a light in the cabin window, so they steered straight for it. Having learned of the plot he had projected the light out over the falls, instead of leaving it in his window. The murderers steered for the light. In that they were right. But the light was in the wrong place, and they were swept by the current over the precipice to death.

A blunt conscience is a crime. Conscience, in its human analysis, depends upon the judgment. So that a right moral judgment is essential to a pure conscience. An unaided human judgment can never be a perfect guide, yet a divinely corrected judgment may be. As if recognizing this truth, Solomon said: "The Lord giveth wisdom. . . . He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the ways of His saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path." James also says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

The thought of self-darkened vision sweeps over the soul like the baleful simoon over the track of the lonely desert Arab. We venture even to ask

whether the logic of the case would not hold us responsible for the light we could have, as well as for that which we do possess. Ignorant, criminal, responsible, doomed! How terrible is the judgment of God upon the lover of sin! If God doomed a race, and wrapped a guilty world in the watery shroud of a deluge, will not the lightning of His anger flash His later judgments upon a more favored world, sinning against the better light of this newer Revelation! We are traveling a strange journey, beset on every hand by sin, yet through love the light of God may shine on our pathway, and make glorious the journey of the years. But we must ask for help. How much more should the one who has the greater privilege in Christ pray, than the one who only knew the light of nature! Yet even the Greek was accustomed to say:

> "I seek what's to be sought—
> I learn what's to be taught—
> I beg the rest of heaven."

V. Look at the mirror of our text in its further truth, touching the influence of love.

The blind devotees of Isis were accustomed, in their worship, to reach up and press the veil against the face of their goddess, to see, if possible, the features underneath. Not so with the new Reve-

lation in our blessed Christ. The words of the Scripture lie like a veil over the features of Divinity. But in answer to the prayer of affection vision is made clear. Christ is seen among the precepts and truths of the Word as John saw Him in the midst of the golden candlestick. The honest inquirer will be led to Him. He will see Him face to face, and, like Thomas of old, will cry out, "My Lord and my God." But Paul's figure is not yet completed. In the eighteenth verse he declares, "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Spirit of the Lord." When the Word is studied, and we gaze steadily into its depths, we not only see the face of the Savior, but gradually the features of His holiness seem to be the mirrored face of the believer himself. We see Him. We study Him. We are absorbed in Him. We imitate His life, follow His teaching, think His thoughts, share His love, delight in His fellowship, rejoice in His purity. The mirror that first gave the face of God, at last gives back the image of the worshiper. We become like Him. "Christ is formed within." We are transformed into His glory, are "partakers of the divine nature." God is known, and heaven is at hand.

VII.

PAUL, THE PREACHER.

"By the grace of God I am what I am."—1 Cor. xv, 10.

It is with unsandaled feet we come into the presence of the great "Apostle to the Gentiles," to sit down before him, as he had done in the presence of Gamaliel, to learn the perfect way of God. Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon ruled with the sword, then forfeited leadership to live alone in history. But Paul for ages has been enthroned in the Empire of living Christian thought, receiving the ovations of the centuries. Among men, like Saul among the tribes, he is head and shoulders above the rest. In his grandeur he stands like a peak of the Rockies, within speaking distance of the stars. It has been well said, "If a ray of light had left the eye of Moses traveling horizontally over the centuries, the first eye it would have struck would have been the eye of St. Paul."

Candor, however, will demand of us, as we

come to the study of *Paul as a preacher,* that we do not shout that the "gods are come down among us," as they of Lycaonia did, for the sun even has spots, and Paul was not perfect.

A great preacher belongs to the centuries, and is at home in every age. Paul was such a man. In briefly reviewing his pulpit record, it is with the hope that a view might be had of the nobler sphere of the ministry and Paul's pulpit virtues imitated in the contest of to-day.

Paul was the independent mind of the Apostolic Church. He carved out a destiny among the great by the absolute independence of his thought. He pioneered the way in the early Church to the acceptance of the equality in salvation of all men before God. This is the prime reason for his great argument in the Roman letter. Peter forfeited the leadership of the centuries when he failed to see the world sweep of the vision before going to Cornelius. For forty years not one of the twelve ever again recognized the idea of Gentile equality. Between the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost and the baptism of blood in Jerusalem's fall, no Gentile convert was ever baptized into the fellowship of Jewish believers. Even after Paul's self-defense before the Jerusalem council, when Peter and

James pleaded for forbearance, the only concession gained was that the Gentiles should be let alone. It was in such a surrounding that Paul lived. We have often thought of the scene in the general council when the unpretentious preacher stood before the arrogance of illiberal Judaism for inspection. In personal appearance he was not one of the giants. The early writers agree in ascribing to the apostle "a short stature, a long face with a high forehead, an aquiline nose, close and prominent eyebrows, baldness, gray eyes, partial blindness, a clear complexion, a winning expression, a sanguine temperament, and some degree of dignity." Not a promising candidate, this, for the highest honors among them. Yet Paul looks well in the dust of a battlefield. As with true greatness, the fray adds the cubit to his stature. Mind and theology were never designed to be put on the scales to be declared in avoirdupois. Paul is measured rather by his intense energy, firm decision, iron will, and profound thought.

It was Paul, the independent, who flung back the challenge to illiberal Judaism and massed the Gentile world an audience, the only auditors in the ages the Apostolic College itself could ever command.

The final secret of Paul's power, however, was not his independent mind, but his dependence upon God. He was "called" of God, and that call gave power to every appeal he made. The caption of almost every letter he wrote bears testimony to his inward conviction of this call. Through this inner call he turned the search-light on Calvary's dark summit, exposing to the throbbing gaze of men the infinite plan of redemption. To the uncalled ministers even the evil spirits say, as they did to the sons of Sceva in Ephesus (Acts xix, 15), "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" Unhappy the hour when inclination and adaptation will fully define the call to the ministry. The final secret of power lies in a conscious command from God, an inwrought conviction to duty, a quenchless longing to save men, an agony that burns its way in, and must burn its way out, till the soul on fire will flash the truth of God in conviction into the hearts of men. The need of the hour is for prophets not priests; for prophetic fire, not ceremonial contentment. We do not need more men in the ministry, but more ministers possessed with a deathless passion to save men. Paul was *a man with a mission,* therefore destiny seemed to wait upon his ministry.

When God called Paul to the ministry he chose one who was willing to *prepare himself* for the best work. Well did he say to Timothy: "Study to show thyself approved" (2 Tim. ii, 15); "Give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. iv, 13); "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. iv, 15). No unlearned fisherman, though bold as Peter or lovable as John, could ever preach like the student of Gamaliel. A lazy minister is as one sleeping on the edge of a rumbling volcano; and he deserves, more than all men beside, to make his bed in its fiery bosom.

Instructed in the law, taught in the schools, great by nature and drill, Paul still *sought the solitudes* of Arabia for three years before entering upon his work. Solitude is the friend of the great, the angel to the good, the world's civilizer. In the quiet hours of study the minister of God will find that hallowed thoughts, like descending manna, will fall from heaven, and the angel of the covenant will break over his heart the sweet perfume of a far-away land.

Let us come nearer to Paul in his work. He was not what men call a popular preacher. He builded too well for immediate approval. His ene-

mies were numerous, so that he said, with more behind the expression than in it,—"If it be possible, live peaceably with all men." There is a tinge of sadness in it. He himself had never been able to do so. He suffered from isolation and jealousy, the penalties of positive character.

He was unselfish. The "call" heralded this. Paul was poised for the ascent to fame, one foot resting on the first step, when he abdicated the coveted throne of Jewish opportunity. Thereafter all honors were unsought. Whether writing to distant Churches, preaching to vagrant crowds, breaking a lance on Ephesian field, or on his way to the "General Conference" at Jerusalem, he was absolutely unselfish. It is with a self-sacrifice akin to the passion of the Son of God he said, "I was about to wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

The companion virtue of unselfishness is fearlessness. That he was "bold" is recorded of him at Jerusalem (Acts ix, 29), at Iconium (Acts xiv, 3), at Ephesus (Acts xix, 8), and at Thessalonica (1 Thess. ii, 2). Once in a while he became rash. We have always admired Paul more because he called the high priest a "whited wall." He came down to our level for once to tell Ananias the plain

truth. He was radical enough generally to cause an uproar, so that we are reminded of Sydney Smith when he said "his life had always been passed like a razor, either in hot water or a scrape." Paul could tack against the wind, but feared the fatal calm.

Still he was modest. Hear him in the Corinthian letter say, "I was with you in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling." His modesty, however, was simply the tension of reserved ability.

He was *shrewd* and *pliable,* ever-present qualities of the finest leadership. At the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem (Acts xxiii, 6), when under fire of his accusers, he deftly threw in the question of the resurrection, setting the company against itself, bringing the Pharisees to his rescue. He was pliable, like the tree in the tempest; grounded in the truth, but yielding in methods and in matters of convenience. When the storm was over he raised himself and stood like a mountain pine. Some preachers never learn the difference between firmness and stubbornness, force and friction. They tear up by the roots in rage in trying to preach a message of love. Paul became "all things to all men, that by all means he might save some." In his Colossian letter he said, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

In style of rhetoric the critic may find much to condemn. He seems often disjointed. His writings remind one of a traveler in the city, passing down the main street, stopping at each crossing and looking both ways. But one thing is certain, he never turns back, nor loses his way. Though Paul's native tongue was Aramæan, he was proficient in Greek; still, as it has been well said, it was the proficiency of a foreigner. We have no reason to think he was a profound scholar in the Greek poets or mythology, even though he did quote once from a play of Menander in 1 Cor. xv, 33, "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" once from Epimenides in Titus i, 12, "The Cretans are always liars;" and once when at Athens from the "Phenomena" of his own countryman, Aratus, in Acts xvii, 28, "For we are also his offspring." He confesses when charged that he "is rude in speech," speaks again of himself as not coming "with the excellency of speech or of wisdom." At Corinth they said his "speech was contemptible." Through malice, however, came the criticism, through modesty the confession. Paul was pointed and penetrating. He always made a point when he spoke, and sharp enough, too, that if some were too blind to see it, they could feel it. His laconic expressions may not

always bend like a Damascus blade, but they cut like a two-edged cimeter. Much of what has been called "profound" preaching has been described as the brilliancy of a "lightning-bug in a fog." Not so with Paul. The deeper the discussion, the more luminous he becomes. Read the book of Ephesians or Romans, the thirteenth or fifteenth chapters of 1 Corinthians or the eleventh of Hebrews, and you are spellbound. It is the eloquence of profound thought.

Let us now come in the company near enough to hear the apostle preach.

Paul never found it convenient to preach from another man's skeleton. His plumes were never borrowed. He was not like the moon, simply a reflector; but, like the sun, he drove his chariot through the pathway of the heavens, majestic in glory, shining out of his own greatness. His sermons were timely, and usually short. When at Troas (Acts xx, 7-11), he preached till Eutychus fell asleep and was killed. If we had power to raise the dead, we, too, might lengthen out our sermons. We can kill, but it is hard to make alive. When he disputed daily in the temple, there is no record of prolixity. Whenever Paul cast out devils, which is the preacher's mission to-day, he used few

words. An ordinary man can say in forty minutes all he can think up in a week.

What tenderness, what sympathy, what loyalty prompted every appeal he made! To the elders of Ephesus he said, "For three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears." When recounting his afflictions he declares, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself." In Cæsarea he said, "I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

As you listen to the great apostle preach, you are greeted with the bugle-call to a battle, and are precipitated, as with the force of an avalanche into the midst of intense conflict. A man in the profoundest depths of conviction stands before you, self-possessed, fearless, but kind. His voice has the ring of the anvil in it, his logic the fire of a divine eloquence. There are five abbreviated, formally recorded sermons in the book of Acts; in chapter xiii, 14-43, where at Antioch he recounts the historical preparation for Christ; in chapter xvii, 22-31, where, on Mars' Hill, he argued one living God; in chapter xxii, 3-21, where he stood on the stairway of the castle in Jerusalem and argued from experience; in chapter xxiv, 10-21, where, at

Cæsarea, he makes a personal defense of his innocence; and in chapter xxvi, 1-23, before Agrippa, where he argues the resurrection from the power of Christ already shown to him. His aim in each case is to *prove* the truth. Nowadays we must have a new name for the livery of each discourse, and have each fresh steed in its labeled stall, or the homiletic critic will rule us out of the race. There was one predominant characteristic in Paul's preaching: He was *argumentative*. How often it is said "he reasoned!" (Acts xvii, 2; xviii, 4; xviii, 19.) As a type of his logic, examine the clear reasoning of the third chapter of 2 Corinthians, where he compares the old and new dispensations. In 1 Cor. xv, he has set the model of the proof of the resurrection for all time; in Ephesians he lays the foundation of the Eternal Church of God; in Galatians he argues the principle of salvation by faith; while in Romans you behold the apostle in the triumph of his profound logic. It is the world's masterpiece. It is not only logic, it is logic on fire. In it he is like a giant in battle, wrought up to the highest tension. His voice sounds like the artillery of the field. He rises in the conflict like a herculean statue among dwarfs. You feel yourself expanding in sympathy

with his inspiration. The text throbs—rises—lives. His outbursts of passion follow in procession, like "thunderstorms across the bosom of the sky." His logic cleaves the avalanche from the mountain-side to bury his opponent in its debris. He throws his soul into the argument like the sweep of a cataract. Like Samson, he feels for the pillars of an unrighteous argument, and, bowing himself, buries the Jew forever from sight.

Paul was pre-eminently *doctrinal.* Though cautioning against "foolish questions, genealogies, and strivings about the law" (Titus iii, 9), he urges both Timothy (2 Tim. iv, 2) and Titus (i, 9) to the study and preaching of doctrine. Doctrinal preaching has more power in it than all other forms combined. It has always been the herald of reformation. Nor are our people averse to it. They simply object to the public post-mortem of creeds, whose statements found point in the peculiar age that called them forth. They know the difference between "the foolishness of preaching," foolish preaching, and preaching foolishness. There never was a time when the Scriptural truths, applied with practical point to life and experience, were more welcomed by a needy world than to-day.

Paul was a man of great and oft-repeated

themes, the most frequent being the resurrection. Whether he stands before Felix (Acts xxiv, 14-21), or Agrippa (Acts xxvi, 8-23), is quoted by Festus to the king (Acts xxv, 19), or preaches to the philosophers of Athens, writes to the Thessalonians and Philippians, or wields his power in the masterly argument in 1 Cor. xv, his transcendent theme is the resurrection.

Paul preached *experience.* As we hear the apostle plead before the infidel world, he almost universally argues the truth of the Word from his own living experience. There are some people in our Churches to-day who decry emotion, and desire the service to be theoretical, quiet, dignified. They are like Lady Dedlock in "Bleak House," so perfectly well-bred that if they were to ascend to heaven they would desire to do so without any rapture. When at Jerusalem, in the midst of the tumult and on the stairway of the castle, allowed a word of defense, he tells the story of his conversion (Acts xxii). When called before King Agrippa he defends his cause by taking refuge in that same cherished experience on the road to Damascus. In his letter to the Romans his mighty argument is sealed in the seventh and eighth chapters by his personal testimony to the power of the great principle

he has declared. There was a divine philosophy in the plan of our early Methodist itinerants. They told what God had done for them with such power that villages and forests trembled to their depths with the echo of a joyful salvation. So long as the tides of human passion remain unchanged, so long must religion find its truest province in a heartfelt experience. The joy and anguish of the heart are the same they were when the Savior prayed amidst the gnarled olives of Gethsemane. Men need the gospel of emotion to-day as much as in any age of the world.

There is one element of power, reserved for final emphasis, which we believe was the true secret of Paul's greatness, and whose lesson should to-day be heeded by every honest preacher of the Word. It is not only his "call" to the ministry, but his frequent knowledge of *God's direct revelation to him.* It was the well-drilled mind that said of the message, "I neither received it of men, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." How clean-cut and strong is the analysis of his own power in the sentence, "O, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision!" When he received his commission on the Damascus road to preach, Paul threw every win-

dow of the soul open heavenward, nor was the logical mind ashamed to say, "I saw the vision." Thereafter heaven's sunlight, mirrored first in his honest intellect, was refracted into the hearts of men. He felt that *God spoke to him.* How clear is this fact among God's people in every age! The judges were chosen leaders by direct revelation. The prophets were those chosen through inner conviction to be the mouthpiece of Jehovah. Their first and great mission was not to foretell, but to plead with men. God spoke to them, and *through* them. They felt it. They knew it. The lament in Eli's day was that there was no open vision. The history of the ages proves that religion falls out of favor when men fail to see God as Paul saw him. The vision of the Almighty is the revelation of individual duty. It is the pledge of triumph, the secret of power. So long as the burning bush flames in sacred story, and we believe God spoke to Moses; so long as Isaiah's lips are touched with the live coal from the altar, and the posts move at the voice of Jehovah; so long as the word of Paul rings in the creeds of the world, or the Son of God cries from an ascending chariot, "I am with you," let not the *vision* depart from the men of God.

Paul bowed for power at the feet of the Son of

God, and then clasped hands with Moses for the leadership of the centuries. When we think of him now, we do not "hear the swish of the executioner's sword, the thud of a falling body, or the dripping of blood." He lives. "I have fought a good fight" rings out over the field. The tocsin of earth dies. The crown descends, and Paul's eternal triumph has begun.

VIII.

LIFE'S PROCESSION OF THE SEASONS.

AN AUTUMN HOMILY.

"He shall be like a tree."—PSA. 1, 3.

THE tree seems human, as though related to man. Wounded, it bleeds. When healed, it scars. It breathes. It bends. It drinks. It dies. You can train it, prune it, dwarf it, break it. Plant it in the garden of God, and it becomes the type of a righteous life.

The tree rises above the earth, as if to say: "Seek those things that are above." It flings its ripening fruit to the sight of the hungry traveler; reaches out its long, laden branches to hold the burning sun in its arms, and shield him; throws its green sheltering cloak around him, when storm-hunted and alone. It bows its graceful courtesy to the shrine of the wind, as the ancient *Lulabh* before Israel's altar. Like a coy maiden, it blushes into added beauty with the first proposal of winter; bur-

nishes its leaf in the frost-decked ray of an October sun, to array itself in the evening dress of the seasons. It mourns with the soughing wind in the bleak midnight, as if sorrowing for human woe. It quietly stands, when the seasons have passed, a silent vigil on the bleak journey of life's winter, to companion with man in the last sorrows of age; then lies down in the silent mold, and stretches its long arms over him while he sleeps.

In the Edenic paradise the tree of good and evil stood in the very midst of the garden. In the final heaven of Revelation it stands by the river proceeding from the throne of God, yielding its leaves for the healing of the nations. David planted it just inside the gate of his garden of Psalms, where, well-watered, it might never die.

The tree in its natural state, doomed to decay, is the type of our visible life; but, in the figurative intent of our text, applies to the righteous man in his enduring inner life, by the grace of God. We desire to follow the analogy of David's tree in each suggestive sphere, applying to man its mingled lessons.

I. The tree that figures the righteous life is *planted,* not of spontaneous growth.

Human need is the impelling passion toward re-

ligion, nor have men ever sought God except in sorrow, or in the stress of conscious sin. The world in all ages has recognized the sin of the heart, and sought forgiveness. When Christ came, He confirmed the fact of man's need and taught him to seek God. Though He made a child the type of the kingdom, it was to teach the simplicity of faith. He asserted His claim upon conscience, and taught men everywhere to repent. The chasms of human nature, even in infancy, are suited to nestle the storms that when full grown will contend for awful mastery on the mountain brow of developed manhood. We must strike at sin, nor be content to simulate virtue. Let not the Church commit the fatal blunder of saluting the fortresses of evil with blank cartridges, instead of with ball and shell. Our guns must do execution. Human nature is unchanged in its need from the day the Savior was shrouded in the agony of Gethsemane to save men. It is the same as it was when from Galilee's mountain He gave the "great commission" to preach the Gospel to every creature. Seize the moon by its horns, and fling it into space! Tunnel your way through the distant sun, and scatter its light into the shadows of the universe! Do something easy; but do not try to make man holy without the miraculous aid of the Spirit of God.

This tree, which is well-watered by the irrigation trench, never lacks, for God's grace is ever ready. Nor is it overflowed by an unnatural supply. No; it is simply *well-watered.* Nor is it planted *in* the stream, but *by its side,* suggesting the relation of this earthly life to the kingdom of grace. The world in which we live is real, not ideal. We are in the midst of life's confusion, its toil, its temptations. We are limited by the endowments of mind and heart, and the materials of the body. We are *in* the world, though we are not to be *of* it. Our feet press the clods. Our brows are bared to the storm. Our hopes and fears strive for uncertain mastery in a world whose lightnings gash the midnights, and whose suns burn the noondays. The life of the ascetic is not the life of the Christ. Like him we are in a real world, with real temptations, whose labors are intense and whose contests are never ending. Happy is that one, who, chastened by the tempest, has learned to balance every storm with the hidden strength of the Almighty.

II. True to nature's law, the fiber of human nature is inherited. Some men are like the oak, some the willow, others the bass, the beech, the hickory, or the enduring redwood. Some are gnarled, some knotted, some straight. Some are

capable of being polished; some not firm enough to take polish. Some are fitted for the beams, the pillars, the porch, the ark, the altar. None need be firewood. All may find a place in God's great temple, if ability will be content in its sphere.

The limits of birth, and the laws of inherited culture, are stronger than death. They survived our ancestors, live in us, and will dominate the generations yet to be. Heaven is not equally gained, nor hell attained. With swift or tardy step, he walks the ways of fame, whose grandfather thrived or lived in vain. The frown of the father, the smile of the mother, their love, their hate, are alike mingled in the life of the child. Some are born with a nature inclined to love, while some must grapple as in death-struggle with themselves for passion's mastery. If men could see that their habits of thought, and even their moods of mind, are bequeathed to their children, years would be too short for noble deeds, and a single hour too long for malicious sport.

Yes! Life seems fixed in the fiber of its inheritance, so that the fruit-tree can never grace a lawn, nor a shade-tree lift its luscious fruit to the kiss of the sunlight. The limits of inheritance hedge the way. They can not, however, defeat the power of

grace. God is able to graft the new life of love upon the wild olive-tree, and cause it to yield the peaceable fruits of the kingdom of Christ.

III. Though the tree breathes through the leaf, yet, through the root it gathers its greatest strength from the *hidden source.*

There are two trees in every nature; one growing downward, the other upward; one destined to fruitage, the other doomed to darkness and toil. Should you grasp the trunk, and shake both earth and leaves from it, you could scarcely tell which grappled the clods, and which the clouds. So must it ever be with human character. Well did Paul say: "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Thought, reflection, meditation, self-examination, the inward balancing of motives and desires, secret communion with the Infinite Spirit, and the review of coming destiny; these are the secrets of a true life. The hurrying hoofs of war chargers are ever clattering our streets. The bloodthirsty cries of either injured or remorseless passion are ever drenching our ears. The wild tumult of both pleasure and pain distract thought, distort reason, and confuse the mind. No man can be strong, nor become stable, who does not open the windows of the soul heavenward in the hours of seclusion, that he

may talk with God. It was in the secluded room, from his studio, that Angelo gathered his inspiration, to come forth, to put into marble the great thoughts that live. Every great mind has learned to dwell apart with God before he has lived in the world's highest honors.

The tree grows from *within*. It reaches out to gather earth and air, through root and leaf, to build from within, its towering trunk in expanding circles. Man never grows by wrapping flesh and blood in cloaks of wool, but by the law of *inner assimilation*. When will the world learn that God is only truly known in man's inner nature! "No man climbs to the throne of God by the pathway of the stars, who has not first faced Him in the inner sanctuary of his own soul." Augustine, after his long struggle with speculative doubt, at last with wonder and joy found God revealing Himself within his own soul. Hear his confession: "Too late I loved Thee, O Beauty, ancient yet ever new! Too late I loved Thee. I searched for Thee abroad, and Thou wert within. I, deluded, abroad, plunging amid those fair forms which Thou hast made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee. Things held me far from Thee, which unless they were in Thee, were not at all. Thou didst call, and shout,

and burst my deafness. Thou didst flash, shine, and scatter my blindness. Thou didst breathe odors and I drew in breath and panted for Thee. Thou touchedst me, and I burned for Thy peace."

IV. The tree, by the river, brought forth "its fruit in its season." When the Savior pronounced the curse upon the fig-tree, He did not say, "Wither away," but, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever." It required but one day to wither and begin to die. Alas for those inactive pretenders who ask a place in the kingdom of God, but whose withered, shriveled branches of many days are doomed to burn!

Close to this thought lies the missionary lesson of the tree. It neither robs its neighbor nor partakes of its own fruit. It reaches it to the passer-by. It rounds it, and ripens it; then holds it in extended hand, refusing, like David in Adullam's cave, to drink of the proffered cup. Even its fragrance is distilled alike upon owner or careless visitor. Go to the tree, thou self-centered Christian, and learn the missionary thought of nature. The earth, the air, the sea, yield their treasures without stint, while the sun burns to bathe the universe in its light. The man who despises Christian missions is out of harmony with the genius of the Gospel, heaps

contempt on its author, and rejects the companionship of the Man of Nazareth.

V. The leaf in the green, the bud, the fruit, the autumn tint, the unleaved skeleton, all remind us of life's procession of the seasons.

Which season of the year do you like the best?

Spring? As it casts its fragrance to the air, whitens tree and earth with its blossoms of promise, sends thought into hidden channels of investigation, and welcomes man to the opening page of nature!

Or is summer noblest? When the golden waves of ripening grain bow with the passing breeze, as if a flying messenger had signaled with deft wand a concert worship of the sun! The doors are flung upon their hinges. Our artificial cells are deserted, while man lives under the arch of blue. Fruits are ripe—harvest is here. The *swish* in the grain mingles with the shouts of the workers; till the summer, weary, rests its head in the lap of the autumn. Yes, the summer is beautiful and we sometimes sing, The summer of the soul would last all the year.

But autumn is the time of gayer hours. The abundant stores are gathered for the coming cold. The welkin's ring of harvest home is heard. The

south wind journeys by the west, and brings the cool, bracing air. Steps are more elastic and spirits more buoyant. The richly decked draperies of clouds of gold and blue float by like angel chariots, while from out their mists come notes of lark and nightingale. Plains are beautiful; mountains dim in the blue haze of the hunting season. Nature, in most gorgeous hue, is robed and crowned for the triumphal procession of the seasons. Hours are tinged with melancholy. The heart is touched with forebodings. Yet no day is ever so beautiful besides as the perfect October day.

Possibly some love the winter best, when bells jingle, hoofs clatter, and the rollicking laugh goes bounding from lip to lip, while tingling frost paints the cheek and cheers the heart. The glowing fire circles the home around its light, and the long winter evenings are the happiest of all the year.

Yes! There is a springtime of youth, a harvest of labor, an autumn of wisdom, and a winter of age.

How happy is childhood! Care traces no furrow. The artless spirits rush to greet the first rays of the morning. The day is spent in thoughtless pleasure, in games and sports, beguiling joys to eye, and lip, and tongue, till life seems a huge joke,

and all nature a storehouse of fun. Then at night to be tucked to sleep by mother's hand, receive the stroke of her anxious interest on forehead and face, and fall to sleep while love bathes the tired spirit, and life is forgotten in needed rest! How often in the perplexing duties of manhood we would fly for relief, were we able, to the guileless days of childhood. We say in our weariness:

> "Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years!
> I am so weary of toil and of tears,—
> Toils without recompense, tears all in vain,—
> Take them, and give me my childhood again."

Yet youth is long. The years are slow. Education will never be done, and the reason for toil is never plain.

Early maturity seems happier. Bravery buoys the soul till its emotions are godlike and its conscious life a priceless boon. Yet, when all should be as merry as a marriage bell, unrequited love or perplexing wonder vexes life's happiest hours. The uncertainties of life's problems and wavering choices dash the soul into the disquiet of a ship, well ballasted, but in a storm at sea.

More eloquent still are vigorous manhood and womanhood, giving battle to the elements. The home built; the wee prattlers stretching out their

hands to the home-comer, talking the "goo-goo" infant language, which love alone interprets; begriming face, and putting fingers in mouth and hair, laughing at the confusion created; while those of a little older growth iron out the troubled forehead with a new conundrum, and, by a challenge of wits, make the despondent bread-winner glad he is alive. The buoyant joy of a home ascending the hill, where love reigns and plenty prevails—that is heaven itself. I would I might stay there a thousand years.

But the years pass. The step unconsciously grows a little slower. For the first time in life, one feels slightly weary. He is reminded that the sustained plateau of life's rugged vigor begins to dip for the slope toward the river. Yet, the mellow years are richer in wisdom. Ambition is tempered with kindness. Friendships are more valued. The associates of the harvest time come more and more to mind. Life yields its richer inspiration. Its Indian Summer is here. Yet the autumn forebodes the shadows of age. The Indian Summer gives place to the thought of winter. The smile of old age is always tinged with sadness. The laugh gives warning of the coming tear. If serene, age is beautiful. Yet no one of us desires to grow old. Age brings

sorrow. Then comes the pall, the shroud, the windowless tomb!

Some time since I stepped into an establishment, and there met the husband and wife, both past middle life. I said, "I hope you are having a most happy Christmas and holiday time." "O, very moderate," she replied; and he added, "We have gotten to the place in life where we do n't care much about living." Shall declining age feel there is no resting place this side the grave? Must man toil on till pick, and pen, and hope drop like seared leaves into the chasm? Is man a deserted waif, hope foiled, faith benumbed, helpless, defenseless, alone?

In early summer I have seen the ripening harvest rolling, billowing in the sunlight, till nature itself seemed to laugh at the sight. But when the winnowing fan and threshing whirl had done their work, there was but little wheat, amidst flying chaff and pretentious cheat. How often the apples are gnarled, the corn blasted, the vintage stung, the winepress clogged, the harvest home a dirge! Unhappy old age! Could anything be more sad?

This is not the Psalmist's thought in the promise, "Its leaf shall not wither," nor is it the intended law of nature. The flower is most beautiful when

in fullest bloom, the fields most graceful when the stalk bends under the waving grain. The fruit is only rich in hue when mellow with advancing weeks. Nature is decked in Joseph's coat, unlike the ancient dreamer, when touched with age. The cataract knots its stream, scatters its spray and leaps with highest glee, when joining the emerald, ebbing flood at its feet. The rainbow spans retreating storms. The sun washes with gold the western slope set with clouds at evening time. Music is most enchanting when breaking in final peals. All nature gathers her forces through earlier months to rush on to the climax of the autumnal season. Eternity graces mortality, and heaven crowns time.

The law of nature is perfection in maturity, nor is man alone to fail! No! Age, by the grace of God, is the time of serenest pleasure. No vexing toil to plan for an uncertain future; no blinding, carping criticism to dull the feelings of love; no fear of disappointed hope; the memory of a life well spent; the knowledge of duty done; the sense of hallowed love linking to the bosom of God; conscience at rest, and faith triumphant; honored of children, blessed of friends, loved by all; no finding of fault, no slighting of worth, no rebellion against God, no fear of death! Serene and pure in the

light of love—at home in either world! What a life! May God give it you all!

The Psalmist, in the triumph of an ancient faith, made more glorious in the light of the newer dispensation, flings out the challenge to the wild tumult of the years, and shouts till all heaven rings in response to the glad acclaim, His leaf shall never wither.

At twenty we are buoyant, at thirty confident, at forty strong, at fifty true, at sixty wise, at seventy pure—then transplanted from earth's sod to the Garden of God.

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